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ROUND HOUSE THEATRE CONTINUES 47TH SEASON
WITH WORLD PREMIERE HOLIDAY MUSICAL

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 & CHOREOGRAPHED BY MARLO HUNTER

Now playing – extended to December 29 at Round House Theatre

Bethesda, Md. (October 10, 2024) – Round House Theatre continues its 2024-2025 Season with a world premiere of *A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical*. With music by **Aaron Kenny**, book and lyrics by **Rob Berliner**, and book and original concept by **Harrison Bryan**, this highly anticipated musical production, directed and choreographed by **Marlo Hunter**, is a celebration of Jewish identity and our common humanity that emphasizes the importance of choosing joy and kindness. Press Night is on Monday, November 25 at 7:30pm. **Please see below for complete program details and ticket information.**

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 Hanukkah's 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 Broadway Shark Tank, *A Hanukkah Carol* is a heartfelt, family-friendly riff on a holiday classic that celebrates making the world a kinder place.

"We're thrilled to continue our 47th Season with *A Hanukkah Carol*," says **Artistic Director Ryan Rilette**. "Aaron Kenny, Harrison Bryan, and Rob Berliner have developed a show that magnifies the beauty of positive Jewish identity, which is all about finding your way back to joy and making the world a better place. After first hearing about the show's concept back in late 2020, we're excited to finally share this world premiere musical with DC-area audiences!"

"*A Hanukkah Carol*'s central theme is 'A Light in the Dark.' Comedy changes the world—it's a salve, a de-escalator, an elixir that cracks open boundaries to make way for conversation; and laughter through tears is an inherently Jewish experience," says **Director and Choreographer Marlo Hunter**. "I hope this magical, hilarious and deeply moving show will bring much-needed light to audiences this holiday season, and become a fresh staple in the American holiday canon."

"*A Hanukkah Carol* is brought to you by two nice Jewish boys and their goyfriend—and we're so excited at the chance to put into the world the kind of show that we wish had existed when we were growing up," says **Rob Berliner (Lyrics & Book)**. "It's a fast-paced, toe-tapping whirlwind celebrating kindness, family, and identity, and the halting of the cycles of pain with light and love... and we hope it makes the holidays a little bit brighter for everyone."

"My time performing in Round House's 2019 production of *The Curious Incident of the Dog in*

the Night-Time is something I will forever cherish,” says **Harrison Bryan (Book & Original Concept)**. “To be returning with *A Hanukkah Carol*, a show that is so personal for me, filled to the brim with my family’s love for the holiday, feels like the perfect return home. Celebrating this show’s world premiere with my NY and DC family alike truly couldn’t bring me more joy.”

The captivating cast includes **Jordan Friend** (*Disgraced* at NextStop Theatre and the West Coast Tour of *Mystic Pizza*), **Nicole Halmos** (*The Cake* at Prologue and NextStop Theatres and *The Alchemist* at Shakespeare Theatre Company), **Kit Krull** (*limp wrist on the lever* reading at Round House Theatre and *She Kills Monsters* at Silver Spring Stage), **Katrina Michaels** (*Hoi Polloi* at Theatre Row and *La Maupin* at Lion and Unicorn Theatre [Off-West End]), **Aviva Pressman** (*Five Little Monkeys* at Adventure Theatre and *God of Comics* at Studio Theatre), **Steve Routman** (*Awake & Sing!* at Arena Stage and *Le Bete* on Broadway), **Samantha Sayah** (*Sister Act* at Geva Theatre Center and *The Buddy Holly Story* at Florida Repertory Theatre), and **Bekah Zornosa** (“*We declare you a terrorist...*” at Round House Theatre and *King Lear* at Shakespeare Theatre Company). Understudies for this production include **Lily Burka**, **Brian Lyons-Burke**, **Sarah Cooney**, and **Bekah Zornosa**. Band members for this production include **Jo Huling**, **Jonathan Marques**, **Patrick Plunk**, and **Imelda Tescson-Juarez**.

The cast is joined by a brilliant creative team, which includes Music Director **Caleb Hoyer**, Associate Director/Choreographer **Caitlin Ort**, Scenic Designer **Andrew Cohen**, Costume Designer **Ivania Stack**, Lighting Designer **Max Doolittle**, Sound Designer **Scott Stauffer**, Illusion Designer **Ryan Phillips**, Puppet Designer **Genna Beth Davidson**, Properties Coordinator **Andrea “Dre” Moore**, Orchestrator **Charlie Rosen**, Copyist **Danielle Gimbal**, Keyboard Programmer **Randy Cohen**, Dramaturg **Gabrielle Hoyt**, Casting Director **Sarah Cooney**, Production Stage Manager **Che Wernsman**, and Assistant Stage Manager **Taylor Kiechlin**.

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

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.

ARTIST INFORMATION

Aaron Kenny (Composer) is excited for *A Hanukkah Carol*, his first full-length stage musical, to have its world premiere at Round House this year! An Australian composer based in NYC, Aaron is celebrated by ASCAP as a "Composer to Watch," and has won Australian Young Composer of the Year and a Telly Award for Best Music/Jingle for *Etihad*. His Off-Broadway debut, *On Your Mark!*, is available on Music Theater International. With lyricist Rob Berliner, he has received a Fred Ebb Award Finalist nod and a Hollywood Music in Media Awards nomination. As the Music Assistant to Alan Menken, Aaron has worked on the music and scores to films *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Disenchanted*, and *Spellbound*. Additionally, he has worked on stage musicals *A Bronx Tale* (Broadway) and *Hercules* (West End). Most recently, he has worked with Stephen Schwartz on the film score to *Wicked*.

Harrison Bryan (Book and Original Concept) is an award-winning actor, playwright, puppeteer, and producer, and is grateful to be returning to Round House Theatre, where he was previously seen as Christopher Boone in *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* (Helen Hayes nomination). He is a proud member of The Dramatists Guild, The Alliance of Jewish Theatre (TheatreMacher Fellowship), and is a guest artist in residence at Windridge Farm. Harrison is a two-time honored finalist at Sondheim's Write-A-Play Festival and recipient of the 2019 New York Innovative Theatre Award. Harrison has performed Off-Broadway at The Cherry Lane, The Daryl Roth, Atlantic Stage 2, and The Sheen Center, with written work at MCC's FreshPlay Festival, Broadway's Comedy Club, FringeNYC, and The O'Neill's Puppetry Conference. His new musical, *BALLS: The Monster-Catchin' Musical Com dy*—featured on NintendoLife and Kickstarter—premieres in NYC next year. Harrison lives in Brooklyn with their beautiful wife and two cats, only a block away from the incredible real-life Hanukkah Fairies who raised him. Instagram: @hahaharrisonbryan / HarrisonBryan.com

Rob Berliner (Book and Lyrics) is a musical storyteller, performer, flight attendant, and Mets fan, and is thrilled to be launching *A Hanukkah Carol* with Round House Theatre. As a lyricist, he has been distinguished as a finalist for the Kleban Prize on four occasions, and for the Fred Ebb Award along with composer Aaron Kenny. While *AHC* is Rob's debut musical as a writer—a full-circle moment, having first gotten his Equity card performing in *A Christmas Carol*—he also contributed lyrics to The Chase Brock Experience's oldies-inspired dance-theater work *BIG SHOT* (NC/Off-Broadway). His multiple updates to Cole Porter's "You're the Top" have been sung by the likes of Ann Harada, Santino Fontana and Laura Osnes at various galas, and by Alan Cumming and Liza Minnelli in rehearsal. Proud affiliations include BMI Lehman Engel Musical Theatre Advanced Workshop, Dramatists Guild, AEA, SAG-AFTRA, "the tribe," and Northwestern University. There are miracles all around! Instagram: @rob.berliner | robberliner.com

Marlo Hunter (Director/Choreographer) is thrilled to be making her Round House (and DC) directing debut with *A Hanukkah Carol*. Marlo was named a "2022 Woman to Watch on Broadway" and is the winner of The Callaway Award for *Unlock'd*, which she directed and choreographed Off-Broadway (World Premiere, The Duke Theater). Select Off-Broadway credits include Director and Choreographer of TheaterWorks USA's *Cat Kid Comic Club: The Musical* (World Premiere, *NY Times* Critic's Pick, 2024 NY Off-Broadway Alliance Award nominee for Best Family Show), which is currently on a National Tour (Kirk Douglas Theatre at CTG – LA; Seattle Children's Theater; Emerson Colonial Theater, Boston); Director of *Picking Up Speed* by Alex Wyse; Choreographer of *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* starring America Ferrera at 2second Stage; Associate Director of *Clueless: The Musical* starring Dove Cameron [Amy Heckerling, book] at The New Group; and Director of *American Morning* by Timothy Huang at ART NY, Prospect Musicals. Select regional credits include Director/Choreographer of *Up and Away* (World Premiere, Pittsburgh CLO); Director/Choreographer of *My Life is A Musical* (World Premiere) at Bay Street Theater; Director/Choreographer & Co-Story of *Island Song* (World Premiere) at Adirondack Theatre Festival); Director/Choreographer of *Date of a Lifetime* (World Premiere) at NJ Rep; and Choreographer of *Travesties*, starring Sam Waterston, at

Williamstown, Long Wharf Theatre. Marlo is currently helming the *Ever After* musical, produced by Kevin McCollum, with music by Zina Goldrich, lyrics by Marcy Heisler, and book by Kate Wetherhead. Her feature film directorial debut, *American Reject*, is available on Amazon and Apple+ and features Kathleen Monteleone (also screenplay), Keala Settle, Annaleigh Ashford, Billy Ray Cyrus, and Angelica Hale. The film debuted at festivals in fall 2020, where it garnered multiple honors, including Best Narrative Feature at the BendFilm Festival. Additional film/TV credits include Director of *Mystic Christmas* for Hallmark, which aired in 2023 (starring Jessy Schram, Chandler Massey, and Patti Murin), and *Trivia at St. Nick's*, premiering this fall on Hallmark and featuring *A Hanukkah Carol's* own Bekah Zornosa. Marlo holds a B.A. in English/Dramatic Literature from Princeton University. She lives in Manhattan with her husband and two children. www.MarloHunter.com

Caleb Hoyer (Music Director) please see digital program for bio.

CAST INFORMATION (ALPHABETICAL)

Jordan Friend (Hanukkah Present...and more) is a NYC and DC-based actor and singer-songwriter, and is delighted to be making his Round House Theatre debut. DC-area credits include *A Delicate Ship* and *Old Soul* at 4615 Theatre and *Disgraced* at NextStop Theatre. Regional credits include *Rock of Ages* at Sharon Playhouse (dir. Hunter Foster), and the west coast tour of the new musical *Mystic Pizza* (dir. Casey Hushion). Jordan's Jewish sci-fi multimedia play, *Candlelight* (co-created with Jenna Place), was developed at Olney Theatre. During lockdown, he performed a virtual tour of his solo OCD rock musical, *Old Soul*. Jordan's original music has been featured by world-renowned recording artist Ben Folds and is available on all major platforms. Cabaret/Performance Fellowship, Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center. BFA, Ithaca College. Instagram: @jordanwfriend | www.yourfriendjordan.com

Nicole Halmos (Hanukkah Past...and more) is delighted to be making her Round House Theatre debut! DC credits include *The Cake* (Helen Hayes Award for Outstanding Lead Performance in a Play) at Prologue and Next Stop Theatres, *The Squirrels* at Maryland Ensemble Theatre, *The*

Alchemist at Shakespeare Theatre Company, and *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre. As a member of the Obie Award-winning Target Margin Theatre Co., Nicole was seen Off-Broadway in *Hamlet*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Dido and Aeneas*, *The Seagull*, and *Faust*. Regional credits include *Galileo* at Yale Rep; *Sweeney Todd* at Baltimore Center Stage; *Wit* at Dallas Theatre Center; *Our Town* at Triad Stage; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe* and *Cabaret* at The Embassy Theatre; and *August: Osage County*, *Carrie*, *Assassins*, and *The Prom* at The Cumberland Theatre.

Kit Krull (Mimi Marley...and more) is thrilled to make his Round House Theatre stage debut after participating in last year's National Capital New Play Festival developmental reading of *limp wrist on the lever*. DC-area credits include *Drunk Shakespeare* at Sage Theatre and *The Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed* at Merriweather Post Pavillion/Drama Learning Center. Other credits include *She Kills Monsters* at Silver Spring Stage and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Spring Awakening*, and *As You Like It* at Howard Community College. Instagram: @kitkrull

Katrina Michaels (Dickensian Orphan...and more) is delighted to make her DC debut in this world premiere production! NYC credits include *Hoi Polloi* at Theatre Row, *Dracula* at 13th St Rep, and *Rhinoceros* at Inwood Shakespeare. Regional credits include *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Pride and Prejudice* at Creede Repertory; *Tribes* and *Spelling Bee* at Florida Repertory; *Peter and the Starcatcher* at Orlando Shakespeare, Eagle Theatre, Argyle Theatre, Creede Repertory, and Winnepesaukee Playhouse; *The 39 Steps* at Depot Theatre; *Twelfth Night* at Colonial Shakespeare; *Cabaret* at Broward Stage Door; and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at Winnepesaukee Playhouse. Tour credits include *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Kindness*. International credits include Off-West End Award-winning *La Maupin*; *No For An Answer* at the Arcola; and *A Soldier's Woman* at the Cockpit. Instagram: @katmichaels27

Aviva Pressman (Mom...and more) is grateful to be returning to the DC theater community after many years away. DC theatre credits include *Five Little Monkeys* at Adventure Theatre and *Astro Boy and the God of Comics* at Studio Theatre. Off Broadway, they have performed at

Madison Square Garden and The Public, and regionally, they've been seen everywhere from South Coast Repertory to Musical Theater West to Disney Concert Hall. Aviva's voice can be heard in multiple animes and commercials, and their one woman show *DEADLIFT* was produced in Los Angeles and Philadelphia to rave reviews. They toured internationally for Amazon Prime as one of the Chattering Order of Saint Beryl for the show *Good Omens*. www.avivapressman.com

Steve Routman (Dad...and more) has appeared in the DC-area productions of *Awake & Sing!* at Arena Stage (Zelda Fischandler, Director) and *Eleanor* at Ford's Theatre (Helen Hayes Award Nomination). His Broadway credits include *La Bete* and *Broadway*. Steve has performed across the country's regional theaters in over 70 productions, including *Rough Crossing*, *Anything Goes*, *The Chosen*, *The Underpants* (CT Critics Award), and *Taming of the Shrew* (Kevin Kline Nomination). Film and television credits include *Killers of the Flower Moon*, *The Trial of the Chicago 7*, *Fosse/Verdon*, and *Inside Llewyn Davis*. Additionally, Steve has appeared at the New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, and New Haven Symphony, and is an award-winning lyricist in the BMI Lehman Engel Workshop. www.Steveroutman.com

Samantha Sayah (Chava Kanipshin) is verklempt to be spreading Hanukkah joy at Round House Theatre this season! As an actor, singer, and musician based in NYC, favorite theatre credits include *Girl in Once* and *Sister Act* at Geva Theatre Center; *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* at Florida Repertory Theatre; *Outlook: Not So Good* at The Tank; *Junie B.'s Essential...* National Tour; Disney Cruise Line, and Tokyo Disney Resort. Film credits include *My Sister's Wedding* and *The Bigfoot Club* with In The Garage Productions. You can stream her original music on Spotify, Apple, and Amazon Music. Love to her family and to her husband, Dante. Special thanks to Danny and Meghan at HAA, and to Harrison, Rob, Aaron, and Marlo for trusting her with the role of a lifetime. Instagram: @samanthasayah | www.samsayah.com

Bekah Zornosa (Barb Kratzyt...and more) is so happy to be back at Round House Theatre for *A Hannukah Carol*. Previous Round House credits include "We declare you a terrorist..." and *She*

Sings Me Home (reading). DC credits include *King Lear* at Shakespeare Theatre Company, *Sanctuary City* at Arena Stage, *There's Always the Hudson* at Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, and *West Side Story* Concert at Olney Theatre Center. Regional credits include *ALIEN/NATION* at the Williamstown Theatre Festival (dir. Michael Arden), *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* at North Shore Music Theatre, and *Pipeline* at Everyman Theatre. TV/film credits include *Trivia at St. Nick's* on Hallmark, *The Floaters* (upcoming feature), *Human Theories* (upcoming feature), and *Evil Lives Here* on Discovery. Training: American University Musical Theatre, Fiasco Theater FTI 2023, Instagram: @bekahzornosa | bekahzornosa.com (She/Her)

PRODUCTION INFORMATION

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 & Choreographed by Marlo Hunter

Nov 20 – Dec 22, 2024

CAST LIST (alphabetical order):

Jordan Friend: Hanukkah Present...and more

Nicole Halmos: Hanukkah Past...and more

Kit Krull: Mimi Marley...and more

Katrina Michaels: Dickensian Orphan...and more

Aviva Pressman: Mom...and more

Steve Routman: Dad...and more

Samantha Sayah: Chava Kanipshin

Bekah Zornosa: Barb Kratzyt...and more

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/.

ABOUT THE PLAY:

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 Hanukkah's 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 Broadway Shark Tank, *A Hanukkah Carol* is a heartfelt, family-friendly riff on a holiday classic that celebrates making the world a kinder place.

DATES AND TIMES:

A Hanukkah Carol, or GELT TRIP! The Musical runs from November 20 to December 22, 2024. Performances are Tuesday through Thursday at 7:30 pm, Friday and Saturday at 8:00 pm, and Saturday and Sunday at 2:00 pm.

Audio described performance: Saturday, November 30 at 2:00 pm

Open captioned performance: Sunday, November 24 at 2:00 pm; Sunday, December 1 at 2:00 pm; and Saturday, December 7 at 2:00 pm

Mask-required performances: Tuesday, December 10 at 7:30 pm; and Saturday December 14 at 2:00pm

TICKETS:

Tickets can be purchased by calling 240.644.1100, ordering online at RoundHouseTheatre.org, or visiting the box office. Available ticket discounts include:

- **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.

- **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.

- **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, November 20 at 7:30 pm and Saturday, November 23 at 2:00 pm and are subject to availability.

- **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.

- **2-For-1 Tuesday:** For all Tuesday performances of *A Hanukkah Carol*, 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.

- **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 performances on December 10 (7:30 pm) and 14 (2:00 pm).**

ABOUT ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

Round House Theatre is one of the leading professional theatres in the Washington, DC area, producing a season of new plays, modern classics, and musicals each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 227 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 52, 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 ages 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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