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ROUND HOUSE THEATRE ANNOUNCES FULL 2020-2021 SEASON

43RD SEASON INCLUDES TONY-WINNING COMEDY, MUSIC-FILLED REGIONAL PREMIERES, AND WORLD PREMIERES IN ROTATING REP, PLUS EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY TICKET ACCESS INITIATIVE

Bethesda, Md. (March 9, 2020) – Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Managing Director Ed Zakreski are thrilled to announce the six shows that will comprise Round House Theatre’s 43rd Season. All shows will be performed in the company’s Bethesda theatre, which reopened in September 2019 after the completion of a \$9 million full interior renovation.

“All the productions in Round House’s 2020-2021 Season embrace theatricality,” Rilette says. “They combine spectacle and wonder with questions and themes that couldn’t be more relevant. The result is a rich and rewarding slate of plays, each of which will stimulate audiences in new and different ways, and all of which speak to the values at the core of Round House Theatre.”

The season begins with the regional premiere of **Quixote Nuevo** (September 2 – 27, 2020) by celebrated playwright **Octavio Solis**. The spirited contemporary adaptation of Miguel de Cervante’s *Don Quixote* transports the classic character to the modern-day US-Mexico border. Filled with humor, bilingual wordplay, and lively Tejano music, the season opener exemplifies Round House’s commitment to producing works that tell vital stories.

The season continues with another old tale made new: William Shakespeare’s **The Tempest** (November 4 – December 27, 2020), adapted and directed by renowned magician **Teller** (of Penn & Teller) and visionary director **Aaron Posner**. This retelling combines Shakespeare’s timeless text with the music of Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan, acrobatic choreography by Matt Kent of Pilobolus, and world-class illusions created by Teller. Produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre, *The Tempest* makes its regional premiere at Round House after sold-out runs in Las Vegas, Cambridge, and Chicago.

Next, Round House audiences will be taken back in time to 1949 Detroit with the regional premiere of **Paradise Blue** (January 27 – February 21, 2021) by MacArthur Genius **Dominique Morisseau**. The third music-infused play of the season, *Paradise Blue* centers on a jazz club

struggling to survive in a gentrifying neighborhood. Featuring themes of love, loyalty, and the cost of genius, the noir tale follows Blue, a gifted trumpeter who must consider selling his once-vibrant Paradise Club.

Following the three regional premieres, Round House will continue its commitment to producing compelling new work with a pair of world premiere plays presented in rotating repertory. After helming *School Girls; Or, The African Mean Girls Play*—which opened the renovated theatre and extended by popular demand—Associate Artistic Director **Nicole A. Watson** will direct ***it's not a trip it's a journey*** (April 13 – May 16, 2021), an electrifying world premiere by **Charly Evon Simpson**. A 2019 selection at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center's National Playwrights Conference, *it's not a trip it's a journey* is a hilarious road trip adventure that also deftly examines friendship, gender, and race in America.

In ***"We declare you a terrorist..."*** (April 6 – May 16, 2021), playwright **Tim J. Lord** takes the real events of the infamous 2002 Moscow theatre hostage crisis and refines them into a taut four-person thriller. Employing elements of both live theatre and film, *"We declare you a terrorist..."* will be co-directed by Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette** and **Jared Mezzocchi**, the team behind *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, which became the third best-selling show in Round House history.

Rilette will also direct the final show of the season, ***God of Carnage*** (June 9 – July 3, 2021) by **Yasmina Reza**. The dark comedy of bad manners won both the Tony Award for Best Play and the Laurence Olivier Award for Best Comedy in 2009. Now, some of DC's finest actors will take the stage to bring to life this hilarious and shocking depiction of two couples whose polite conversation about a schoolyard altercation quickly turns petty and childish—and then devolves into all-out war. See pg. 3 for full season production details.

Round House also announces the upcoming expansion of its new community access ticket initiative, **On the House**, following a successful pilot year. On the House provides complimentary group tickets to qualifying 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations interested in sharing the enjoyment of live theatre with their constituents. While applications were limited to Maryland-based organizations for the 2019-2020 Season, the program will expand to both the District of Columbia and Virginia in the 2020-2021 Season. To date, more than 1,200 free tickets have been distributed to more than 30 local organizations through On the House. Students age 13 – college and student groups will continue to have access to complimentary tickets through the **Free Play** program. For more information about ticket access programs, visit RoundHouseTheatre.org/OnTheHouse and RoundHouseTheatre.org/FreePlay.

Round House's commitment to community engagement was further reflected in the completion of its full interior renovation. The renovated building, which officially re-opened to the public with a ribbon-cutting and Community Open House on August 25, 2019, has received acclaim for the warm and

welcoming atmosphere of the lobby, the locally produced food and beverage options in the Fourth Wall Bar and Café, and the intimacy and improved acoustics of the theatre. The warm and welcoming new space has also quickly become a popular location for local groups and organizations to host events.

“It has been wonderful to see Round House transformed into a welcoming community gathering space while also producing work at an ever-higher level of artistry,” adds Managing Director **Ed Zakreski**. “Next season, audiences will be treated to the most ambitious and varied set of shows we’ve put together yet. By embracing music, theatre, and spectacle, the 2020-2021 productions remain true to our mission to provoke empathy and demand conversation, but also promise to delight and astound. After all, couldn’t we all use a little more magic in our lives?”

2020-2021 SEASON DETAILS

MUSIC-FILLED MODERN FABLE

Quixote Nuevo

By Octavio Solis

SEP 2 – SEP 27, 2020 | Regional Premiere

“Make room for *Quixote Nuevo*,” raves *The Boston Globe*. This inspired adaptation—set to a spirited soundtrack of Tejano music—reimagines Cervantes’ beloved knight Don Quixote as a brilliant, bilingual professor whose fantasies take center stage in a Texas border town. Along with his trusty sidekick, this modern-day Quixote journeys through the desert, tilting at patrol drones instead of windmills as he searches for long-lost love. With humor and pageantry, *Quixote Nuevo* breathes new life into one of literature’s most vibrant characters to ask the classic question: when times are tough, how do we keep dreaming?

CLASSIC TALE MAGICALLY REIMAGINED

The Tempest

By William Shakespeare

Adapted and Directed by Aaron Posner & Teller

NOV 4 – DEC 27, 2020 | Regional Premiere

Shakespeare’s tale of betrayal, reconciliation, and love is part fairytale, part romance—and all magic. In this new retelling by Aaron Posner and Teller (of Penn & Teller fame), Prospero’s island transforms into a traveling tent show of trickery and amazement. Featuring astonishing feats of live magic and the haunting songs of Tom Waits and Kathleen Brennan, this adaptation “awakens...a sense of pleasurable, almost childlike wonder” (*The New York Times*). After enjoying sold-out runs across the country, *The Tempest* makes its regional premiere at Round House Theatre, produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre.

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ELECTRIFYING NOIR DRAMA

Paradise Blue

By Dominique Morisseau

JAN 27 – FEB 21, 2021 | Regional Premiere

Lies. Love. Jazz. The year is 1949, and one of the last jazz clubs in Detroit's Black Bottom neighborhood threatens to close its doors forever. Gifted trumpeter Blue and his lover Pumpkin face the forces of gentrification encroaching on decades of tradition. When a mysterious woman rolls into town with her own plans, both Pumpkin and Blue must reckon with their past, their future, their music, and their love for each other. Praised by *New York Magazine* as "powerful and exciting," *Paradise Blue* is a noir tale of "human suffering, awakening, and transformation" brought to electrifying life.

NAIL-BITING POLITICAL THRILLER

"We declare you a terrorist..."

By Tim J. Lord

Directed by Ryan Rilette & Jared Mezzocchi

APR 6 – MAY 16, 2021 | World Premiere

Moscow, 2002: halfway through Putin's first official term as President. After he brutally crushes a rebellion in the territory of Chechnya, a group of Chechen insurgents hijack a blockbuster musical and take the entire audience of nearly 800 people—including the playwright—hostage. Based on the real events of the Dubrovka Theater hostage crisis, "*We declare you a terrorist...*" follows the playwright as he comes to terms with that tragic night at the theatre. This taut political thriller is brought to life through live theatre and film by co-directors Ryan Rilette and Jared Mezzocchi, the team behind the runaway hit *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

HILARIOUS & HEARTWARMING ADVENTURE

it's not a trip it's a journey

By Charly Evon Simpson

Directed by Nicole A. Watson

APR 13 – MAY 16, 2021 | World Premiere

June needs a journey. Like, now. So, she convinces her friends to ditch New York City (and their cellphones) for an impromptu road trip to the Grand Canyon. As the four wildly different women travel through the wondrous and not-so-wondrous sights of the United States, they must come together to contend with being black, female-identifying, and American...all at the same time. An intimate play with vast ambitions, *it's not a trip it's a journey* is about road trips, friendships, and finding the difference between surviving and thriving.

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TONY-WINNING COMEDY OF BAD MANNERS

God of Carnage

By Yasmina Reza

Directed by Ryan Rilette

JUN 9 – JUL 3, 2021

“Never underestimate the pleasure of watching really good actors behaving terribly,” exclaims *The New York Times* about Yasmina Reza’s Tony Award winner for Best Play. When two seemingly polite couples meet to sort out a schoolyard altercation between their sons, the gloves stay on...at first. Soon enough, the savagery beneath their veneer of civility is revealed. When the evening descends into mayhem, no one is safe, and everyone is guilty. Featuring some of DC’s finest talent, *God of Carnage* is a masterclass, gasp-out-loud comedy.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscription packages to Round House Theatre’s 2020-2021 Season are now available for purchase online at **RoundHouseTheatre.org**, or by calling the Box Office at **240.644.1100**. Subscribers get the best seats on their preferred night, as well as free ticket exchanges, no single ticket fees, and free unlimited coffee. Tickets for individual productions will be available for sale Summer 2020.

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 40,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 197 Helen Hayes Awards and has won 37, 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 & Youth.

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