# ANNUAL REPORT FISCAL 2023

# ROUND HOUSE THE ATRE REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

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# 2022-2023 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

- The 2022-2023 Season was the best-selling in Round House history, with more than 60,000 patrons attending performances at our Bethesda theatre.
- *The Tempest* became the best-selling production in Round House history, welcoming viewers (in person and virtually) from across the country and the world. (See pages 12-15 for more information.)
- In addition to record breaking attendance at the theatre, more than 7,000 people viewed *The Tempest* virtually, including nearly 5,400 via virtual student matinees.
- Round House was honored with 16 Helen Hayes Award nominations for plays from the 2022 calendar year (ten for *The Tempest*, four for *Nollywood Dreams*, and one each for *Nine Night* and *"We declare you a terrorist..."*), winning five—the most of any theatre in the plays categories. (See pages 14-15 for more information.)
- Our Teen Performance Company welcomed its largest audiences ever for the 21st Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play, Dani Stoller's *Girlhood*, with teen comedy troupe The Roundlings joining the fun for a Teen Takeover Weekend on our main stage.
- The National Capital New Play Festival returned for its second year, comprising five weeks of world premieres, readings of new plays in development, and panel discussions. Mary Kathryn Nagle's *On the Far End* became the first of Round House's Equal Play commissions to appear in our main stage season.

- Round House welcomed the Caribbean community for a performance of *Nine Night* and the Native and Indigenous community for a performance of *On the Far End*. Members of both productions stayed after the show to meet, chat, and celebrate with audience members on these special Community Nights, established for specific cultures to celebrate and enjoy a performance that represents their community on the main stage.
- Furthering our commitment to providing full access to patrons with disabilities, we had our second main stage Relaxed Performance during the run of *Radio Golf*. Our Relaxed Performances aim to provide a safe and welcoming environment for individuals with sensory and cognitive disabilities, their families, and friends.
- Round House celebrated our annual *Broadway in Bethesda* Gala featuring Tony Award winner Laura Benanti. The evening raised more than \$280,000 in support of Round House programs, including our Theatre for Everyone initiative.
- Following a two-year hiatus due to COVID, Round House led not one but *two* weeks of our beloved London Tour, enjoying outstanding theatre, restaurants, and museums.



Restroom





# DEAR FRIENDSE,

THANK YOU for making the 2022-2023 Season at Round House a spectacular one. We often talk about the magic of live theatre, but it has never been brought to life quite so viscerally as it was during the 2022-2023 Season. After a trying two and a half years of producing theatre during the height of a global pandemic, this season represented more than a return to normal-it sparked

**THE 2022-2023** SEASON WAS ONE FOR THE RECORD BOOKS. inspiring visions of the future of American theatre: new voices, new takes on treasured classics, and new approaches to producing theatre that enable us to dream bigger than ever before.

The 2022-2023 Season was one for the record books. We were thrilled to finally celebrate the American premiere of Natasha Gordon's West End hit Nine Night after a COVID-related postponement from the 2021-2022 Season. Our blockbuster production of William Shakespeare's The Tempest as adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller, featuring elements of magic, illusion, music, and dynamic movement was extended twice due to popular demand, becoming the best-selling show in Round House history. We also made the production available for virtual Student Matinees, enabling us to reach more than 5,000 students across the

country and around the world, including 47 US states and 13 different countries—as far away as Australia and Albania!

The second annual National Capital New Play Festival delivered on our goal to celebrate the new play development process. Both world premiere productions featured in this year's festival, On the Far End by Mary Kathryn Nagle and Jennifer Who Is Leaving by Morgan Gould, grew out of readings performed as part of the inaugural festival in 2022. We're particularly proud that On the Far End is

the first Round House commission to be produced from our Equal Play commissioning program, while a powerhouse cast of legendary DC actors brought to life the all-too-relevant Jennifer Who Is Leaving.

For the final show of the season in our Bethesda theatre. The 2022-2023 Season has proven that we are stronger we returned to Pittsburgh's Hill District to experience together, whether partnering with peer companies to create August Wilson's Radio Golf, the modern conclusion to compelling new experiences, enriching our storytelling the playwright's acclaimed American Century Cycle. This through the diversity of new voices, or expanding our remarkable production offered us the opportunity to host audiences with stories that reflect our community. our first-ever Black-Out Night, a performance dedicated to Black audiences that created space to enjoy a show for and about the Black community.

Events like Black-Out Night are a vital part of our mission to be a theatre for everyone. During the 2022-2023 Season, we created a Racial Equity Plan that will support the culture of Round House as an anti-racist theatre. We were also honored to host important discussions aligned with the stories told on our stage; during our world premiere production of *On* the Far End, we welcomed playwright and performer Mary Kathryn Nagle and representatives from Muscogee Nation

for a discussion on the state of Indian law. More than anything, you make us stronger. As we navigate the brave new world of producing theatre in a post-pandemic To close the season, we partnered with our friends at Olney landscape, we are immensely grateful for your continued Theatre Center to co-produce Fela!, the first time this support. With every performance you attend, every class you remarkable story has been told on an American stage since take, every friend you bring, every donation you give, and all its national tour and Broadway revival ten years ago. This the time, energy, and spirit with which you celebrate Round partnership represents the best of Montgomery County House, you make us stronger. theatre; by working together, we can stage bigger, bolder productions than we would be able to produce on our own. Thank you for being the heart of Round House, and for Fela! not only united Round House and Olney audiences, but making this season truly magical. also brought new audiences to the theatre-often for repeat performances!—to experience this moving story told by an unforgettable cast.

Round House is proud to be an artistic home for local teens. This season, our commitment to young artists reached new heights with our first-ever Teen Takeover Weekend. For three days, our Teen Performance Company took over the Round House stage to produce the world premiere of *Girlhood* by DC-based playwright Dani Stoller. The weekend also featured our teen improv and comedy troupe The Roundlings in a

- performance of their hilarious original show, No Character
- *Limit.* These phenomenal performances are always a
- highlight of our season as they represent the limitless future of American theatre.

# **THE 2022-2023 SEASON** HAS PROVEN THAT WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER.



RYAN RILETTE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



ED ZAKRESKI MANAGING 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 4 - OCT 9, 2022** NINE NIGHT

BY NATASHA GORDON DIRECTED BY TIMOTHY DOUGLAS AMERICAN PREMIERE

[AN] ENGROSSING PRODUCTION -WASHINGTON POST

LEAVES THE AUDIENCE ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS.

-DC THEATRE SCENE

10

# "CHALLENGING AND REWARDING... WE HAVE WAITED FOR A PLAYWRIGHT WHO SPEAKS TO THE MOMENT LIKE NATASHA GORDON."

American premiere of Natasha Gordon's Nine Night, a West End hit which was named "one of the top 20 plays of the 21st Century" by The Guardian. The long-awaited Round House production was originally scheduled for the 2021-2022 Season and was postponed due to COVID-19. Directed by Timothy Douglas and performed by a stellar cast, led by Lilian Oben (in a Helen Hayes-nominated performance), Nine Night explored the tensions of inhabiting two cultures. Following the death of matriarch Gloria, her family gathered for the traditional Jamaican Nine Night, a multi-day celebration full of food, revelry, and a nonstop parade of mourners. The production navigated the inescapable bonds of family and the many layers of grief in an "exuberantly funny" (The Guardian) and profoundly relatable story of the ties that bind.

translate on stage.

Nine Night also presented multiple opportunities to engage and partner with outstanding local organizations, including The Jamaican Nationals Association of DC Metro Area, and to host Caribbean Community Night, held under the Patronage of Her Excellency Audrey Marks, Ambassador of Jamaica to the United States.

-BROADWAY WORLD

### ROUND HOUSE THEATRE BEGAN ITS 45TH SEASON WITH THE

This season-opener, which is the first play by a Black British woman to reach the West End, embodied Round House's continued mission to produce new works that foreground artists of color and, by extension, welcome audiences of color. The production was well received by both audiences and critics, including The Washington Post, which deemed this play an "electric" production with a terrific cast that depicts grief and family tension in a "moving, insightful, and sometimes funny" way. Playwright Natasha Gordon was also featured in The Washington Post's Theatre and Dance section, where she shared her journey of writing Nine Night, and how important lessons of her life

Sine Night was sponsored by Nan Beckley.

NOV 23, 2022 - JAN 29, 2023

# THE TEMPEST 🖤

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE ADAPTED AND DIRECTED BY AARON POSNER & TELLER CHOREOGRAPHY BY PILOBOLUS MUSIC BY TOM WAITS Produced in collaboration

Produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre

A FEAST FOR THE

EVES AND EARS, AND MORE THAN THE SUM OF ITS EXCEPTIONAL PARTS.

-DC THEATER ARTS

THE TEMPEST DAZZLES WITH JAW-DROPPING MAGIC AND

SEDUCTIVE MUSIC

-WASHINGTON CITY PAPER

# "ENCHANTING [AND] EXHILARATING"

-THE WASHINGTON POST

### THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE 2022-2023 SEASON

was our *literally* magical production of *The Tempest*, adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller (of Penn & Teller fame) and featuring haunting music from the catalog of iconic songwriter Tom Waits and mind-bending moves from Pilobolus. The unforgettable reimagining of Shakespeare's most enchanting romance ran for ten weeks and was seen by over 30,000 people, breaking box office and attendance records on its way to becoming the best-selling show in Round House history.

Produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre, the production received rapturous press coverage and reviews (including three separate pieces in *The Washington Post*), and delighted audiences from forty-seven states, DC, and Puerto Rico, as well as seventeen countries, thanks to a popular streamed option and remote virtual viewing for students. Throughout the run, patrons enjoyed panel discussions on magic in theatre, producing Shakespeare in the 21st century, and more.

The Tempest was sponsored by The GPS Fund, Judy and Leo Zickler, and Celia and Keith Arnaud. This project was part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.



# "IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE A BETTER VERSION OF THE TEMPEST THAN THIS PRODUCTION THAT POSITIVELY VIBRATES WITH TALENT."

-METRO WEEKLY

# BREWING UP SOME MAGIC...

Round House partnered with Astro Lab Brewing to create a special, limited-run beer in celebration of *The Tempest!* Card Trick Ale, a black IPA, was available on tap at Round House's Fourth Wall Bar & Café and Astro Lab's Silver Spring tap room, as well as in four-packs at retailers across the region. The promo code included on the beer cans attracted new theatre patrons beyond Round House's usual audiences.



# **HELEN HAYES AWARDS**

*The Tempest* was honored with a whopping ten Helen Hayes Awards nominations, winning four.

#### Wins:

Outstanding Supporting Performer in a Play (Hassiem Muhammad and Ryan Sellers) Outstanding Choreography in a Play (Pilobolus) Outstanding Lighting Design (Thom Weaver) Outstanding Sound Design (Andre Pluess and Adam W. Johnson)

#### Additional nominations:

Outstanding Ensemble in a Play Outstanding Production in a Play Outstanding Music Direction in a Play (Liz Filios, Shaina Taub, and Manny Arciniega) Outstanding Set Design (Daniel Conway) Outstanding Supporting Performer in a Play (Nate Dendy) Outstanding Direction in a Play (Aaron Posner and Teller)



IN ROUND HOUSE THEATRE HISTORY

> STREAMED BY VIEWERS IN DDD COUNTRIES

ATTENDED BY PATRONS FROM

STATES, DC, AND PUERTO RICO

OVER

USED IN THE TEMPEST

6,5004

# STUDENTS PARTICIPATED

IN A *TEMPEST* VIRTUAL OR IN-PERSON STUDENT MATINEE



# FEB 17 - 19, 2023 THE 21ST ANNUAL SARAH METZGER MEMORIAL PLAY GIRLHOOD

BY DANI STOLLER WORLD PREMIERE

"A LOT OF THE THINGS WE WRITE ABOUT YOUNG GIRLS FOR THEATRE ARE MORE ABOUT PROTECTING THE ADULTS WATCHING. WE INFANTILIZE [THE TEENS]. THEY HAVE THESE BRILLIANT MINDS, AND THEY'RE SO THOUGHTFUL WITH SUCH A STRONG SENSE OF MORALITY. I WANTED TO WRITE THAT FOR THEM. IT WARMED MY HEART WHEN THE KIDS SAID, 'DANI WRITES HOW KIDS TALK.'"

- PLAYWRIGHT DANI STOLLER IN AN INTERVIEW WITH ITHACA NEWS

THE ROUND HOUSE THEATRE TEEN PERFORMANCE COMPANY (TPC) is a pre-professional program for a select group of teen artists that teaches them the skills required to produce a professional production. Round House covers the full cost of the program, allowing 25 students representing 16 schools from around the region to participate in the program at no cost. The program seeks to inspire, teach, guide, and support young theatre artists in the play-making process and encourages the development of critical life skills including time management, communication, collaboration, and creative problem solving.

The program begins each fall with students attending Round House productions and special events as well as a series of Master Classes with professional theatre artists and culminates in The Sarah Metzger Memorial Play. The production is directed, designed, stage managed, and performed by the members of the Teen Performance Company, who work closely at every step with experienced professional artists and practitioners as mentors. This season, TPC students worked on the world premiere production of *Girlhood* by local playwright Dani Stoller.

Girlhood, specifically commissioned for the Teen Performance Company, captured the stories of young women navigating their adolescence from their hideaway under an abandoned overpass. Identity, sexuality, and their unique upbringings all played a part in how they transitioned from childhood to young adulthood and figured out what comes next. The play explored the dreams, fears, humor, and heartache of coming of age in an intimate series of vignettes.

This year, for the first time, the Teen Performance Company performed as part of a Teen Takeover Weekend with The Roundlings, our teen improv and stand-up comedy group. The Roundlings' original show, No Character Limit, represented months of learning, creativity, and team building that features teen voices as actors and as creators, learning from an exceptional mentor (and truly funny guy), Kevin Corbett. The Roundlings featured 17 students from 11 schools, including outstanding projection work by graduating senior Benjamin Pallansch. Featuring both of our teen performance groups on the stage made for a wonderful celebration of our teen artists and Round House Theatre's commitment to developing the next generation of theatre artists.

We would like to offer a special end-of-year shout-out to our Teen Performance Company seniors, many of whom were completing college applications between master classes and rehearsals: Lillian Aguirre, Atiah Can Ozturk, Xina Costen, Temitope Ibironke, Frankie Grimaldi, Sammi Jones-Ouartey, Natali Lopez, Benjamin Pallansch, Jed Sadgi, Julia Schroeder, and Isabelle Strauss-Riggs.

"I got to get acting experience in a professional theatre and direct immediate feedback from professionals on my performance. This is a rare experience for people our age and I am so extremely grateful I was chosen to be a part of it. Learning how to navigate working on a new play was also a good lesson/insight for me. It was something that is very unique to be able to work on and be a **part of.**" – Teen Performance Company Participant



# NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL SECOND YEAR

fter a successful launch in 2022, this season saw the return of Round House's National Capital New Play Festival (NCNPF). The second iteration included two full world premiere productions (Morgan Gould's Jennifer Who is Leaving

and Mary Kathryn Nagle's On the Far End—an Equal Play Commission!) and five staged readings. At a time when the new play ecosystem is contracting across the American theatre, Round House is proud to continue its commitment to new plays.

For such a new festival—one launched during the pandemic!-it is thrilling to see how quickly both

local audiences and national and industry audiences are embracing NCNPF. In 2023, we welcomed over 3,000 patrons in total to festival events, more than double the amount from the previous year's festival. Simultaneously, the festival continues to allow Round House to introduce national playwrights to the artists and audiences of the Washington region, leaving them eager to return.

The National Capital New Play Festival Developmental Reading Series was sponsored by Clare Evans, with additional support from The RPM Fund. Additional support for the National Capital New Play Festival was provided by The Morgan Fund at Seattle Foundation.



Bad Books by Sharyn Rothstein: This guintessential "Round House play" offered a microcosm of modern American division with understanding. humor, and empathy. Motivated by the playwright's desire to put "a badass librarian" on stage, the play had audiences eager to debate the many issues it raised— at least, once they stopped laughing.



*limp wrist on the lever* by Preston Choi: This queer conversion camp revenge ghost story provided patrons with a taste of the breadth of American new plays, speaking so directly to the concerns and tastes of young, queer, and diverse audiences. But what was most exhilarating was seeing our full intergenerational audience coming together and connecting through their shared enjoyment of this invigorating new play.

# **DEVELOPMENTAL READINGS**

R ound House approaches our new work program holistically, with the goal of supporting new plays from their very beginnings with our Equal Play commissioning program; in the development stage by supporting playwrights with workshops and readings; and through to production by staging one to two fully produced world premieres in each season. We saw many returning faces as patrons who experienced last season's readings made sure to come back again to see the fully staged productions of On the Far End and Jennifer Who Is Leaving. We also welcomed some new fans, first-time attendees who wound up joining us for the full slate of readings. We're so excited by new work, and it's tremendous to see our audiences finding that same excitement and joy. The readings allow our audiences to better understand the journey of a play while simultaneously helping to shape what those plays ultimately become. And we believe that those plays are better for being touched by DC audiences!



How to Raise a Freeman by Zakiyyah Alexander: A Venturous List selection from the showrunner of ABC's Grownish, this play focuses on a Black couple torn over how best to prepare their son for life as a Black man in America, and the extreme choice the husband makes in that effort. Also, it's a comedy!



Hot Little Slice by Jennifer Barclay: Inspired by Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus, this intimate portrayal of emotional manipulation and women's rage prompted a tremendous amount of discussion and feedback from the audience. Many patrons saw themselves and their own relationships in the characters, and both talkbacks were highlights of the festival!



She Sings Me Home by Artemis Montague: A homecoming for the writer, who attributes their career in theatre to their time in Round House Education programs, this musical put a human face on the mental health crisis of our country, showing a glimpse of the found family that marginalized people build up to survive medical violence. Audiences were transported by the soul and R&B tunes of this innovative and beautiful musical.

# MAR 30 - MAY 7, 2023

# <complex-block>

CLASSIC DONUT

DUNKIN' RUN

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY MORGAN GOULD WORLD PREMIERE | PART OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

# AN EMPATHETIC DARK COMEDY THAT SHINES THROUGH ITS ACTORS.

-BROADWAY WORLD

# **"WOMEN'S WORK** S NO JOKE BUT THIS DARK COMEDY TURNS IT INTO A TREAT."

# THE NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL KICKED

off with the world premiere of *Jennifer Who Is Leaving* by Morgan Gould and featured an all-star cast (Kimberly Gilbert, Nancy Robinette, Floyd King, and Annie Fang). This dark comedy, set at a Dunkin' Donuts in the middle of a blizzard, explored the often absurd expectations placed on women and the tedium of emotional labor and caregiving.

Gould balanced her keen social commentary with hilarious physical comedy, creating a production that was both amusingly charming and sometimes all too familiar. When Jennifer, played by Kimberly Gilbert, finally reached her breaking point and chose to reject the crushing weight and frustrations of her life, the effect was profoundly cathartic.

Due to the skill of the actors, the vision of the playwright-director, and the extreme relevancy of the script, *Jennifer Who Is Leaving* was a runaway hit. This world premiere was first workshopped at last year's inaugural National Capital New Play Festival, and its success is a testimony to the power and potential of the Festival. We are grateful to the Festival's audiences and supporters, who were a key part of the journey and growth of this incredible production.

🧾 Jennifer W

# **"A KNOCKOUT PLAY** THAT SHOULD BE DESTINED FOR BROADWAY"

-THE WASHINGTON POST

Jennifer Who Is Leaving was sponsored by Mitch and Heidi Dupler.

-DC THEATER ARTS



# APR 1 - MAY 7, 2023 ON THE FAR END

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY MARY KATHRYN NAGLE DIRECTED BY MARGOT BORDELON WORLD PREMIERE PART OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL

# BEAUTIFUL NOTEWORTHY

-MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

COMPELLING F R O M START TO EINISH

-DC THEATER ARTS

# "INSPIRING... A POISED AND APPEALING PERFORMER"

National Capital New Play Festival was the evocative and compelling one-woman show On the Far End. Like Jennifer Who Is Leaving, On the Far End was featured as a staged reading in last year's National Capital New Play Festival, and we are proud to have been entrusted with the first production of this important play. On the Far End is also the first Equal Play commission to be performed on our main stage. (Over ten years, the Equal Play commissioning program will commission and develop 30 new plays written exclusively by women playwrights and playwrights of color.)

Written and performed by playwright, attorney, activist (and now Round House Theatre board member!) Mary Kathryn Nagle, On the Far End told the remarkable story of Muscogee Activist (and Nagle's mother-in-law) Jean Hill Chaudhuri. In an honest, direct style of storytelling, Nagle shared heartbreaking, funny, and inspiring tales from Chaudhuri's life. While the play is deeply personal, On the Far End also used one woman's story as a microcosm in which to study the long legacy of promises made to Native tribes and then broken by the American government.

Riyaz Kanji.

-THE WASHINGTON POST

### THE SECOND MAIN STAGE PRODUCTION OF THE

While On the Far End explored many difficult themes, it was also ultimately a celebration of the courage and resiliency of Native American activists and tribes. Round House was particularly honored to host several dignitaries from the Muscogee Creek Nation at our opening night, including Chief David Hill, First Lady Monica Hill, Attorney General Geri Wisner, and Council member Joyce Deere. The important conversations at the center of On the Far End were further explored in special events including our Native American & Indigenous Community Night and a panel discussion on the state of Indian Law featuring Nagle, Muscogee Nation Ambassador Jonodev Chaudhuri, and Muscogee Nation lead counsel

> On the Far End was sponsored by Leslie Grizzard and Joe Hale and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts.



# JUN 7 - JUL 2, 2023 AUGUST WILSON'S DIRECTED BY REGINALD L. DOUGLAS

# "IMPRESSIVE... ALL ITS ELEMENTS ARE MASTERFULLY PLACED TO TELL A TIMELY STORY"

-MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

**"A POWERFUL TAKE ON THE** CONTEMPORARY BLACK LIVED EXPERIENCE... AUTHENTIC [AND] WRYLY AMUSING

-METRO WEEKLY

returned to Pittsburgh's Hill District when we staged the final play of August Wilson's American Century Cycle, Radio Golf. With this play, Round House completed the "Aunt Ester Cycle" within the larger American Century Cycle after producing Two Trains Running in 2014 and Gem of the Ocean in 2018. We were happy to welcome Mosaic Theater Company's Artistic Director Reginald L. Douglas to Round House for the first time to direct this production.

**"IMMERSIVE AND** 

**INVIGORATING**"

-BROADWAY WORLD

Ξ

# "RADIO GOLF FINDS JUST THE RIGHT FREQUENCY"

-THE WASHINGTON POST

IN THE SPRING OF 2023, ROUND HOUSE THEATRE

August Wilson's Radio Golf explored the trajectories of two Black businessmen and best friends, Roosevelt Hicks (played by Ro Boddie) and Harmond Wilks (played by JaBen Early). In the play, Wilks is running to become Pittsburgh's first Black mayor while redeveloping the struggling Hill District with the help of Hicks. But one house stands in the way of their plans: 1839 Wylie Avenue, the home of Wilson's beloved character Aunt Ester. This compelling and powerful production asked complicated and fascinating questions about the interplay between history and progress; the fine line between development and gentrification; and obstacles that continue to block Black mobility in America.

The run of *Radio Golf* also marked several exciting and unique opportunities to connect with new audiences and community partners. During the run of Radio Golf, we hosted our very first Black-Out Night, in which we welcomed an all-Black-identifying audience to experience and discuss this show made by Black artists in fellowship with each other. We were also proud to partner with Montgomery County Public Schools to bring students who had not previously attended student matinees at Round House to Radio Golf. Students from Wheaton High School, Northwood High School, and John F. Kennedy High School were able to attend a show at Round House for the first time at no cost to them or the school.

August Wilson's Radio Golf was sponsored by Doug & Lorraine Bibby and Jay & Robin Hammer.



# JUL 7 - AUG 20, 2023

# FELA!

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY FELA KUTI BOOK BY BILL T. JONES AND JIM LEWIS DIRECTED BY LILI-ANNE BROWN CO-PRODUCED WITH OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

**ROUND HOUSE THEATRE** AND OLNEY THEATRE CENTER STRIKE GOLD WITH *FELA*!

-DC THEATER ARTS

# "EXHILARATING... **DOES THE SHRINE**

(Angels in America Parts I and II) and 2017 (In the Heights), Round House Theatre again partnered with Olney Theatre Center to co-produce an ambitious, epic show. With floor-shaking Afrobeat music and dance, Fela! (performed at Olney Theatre Center) told the inspiring true story of musician, activist, and global superstar Fela Anikulapo Kuti. Through Kuti's unique and iconic music—a spirited blend of traditional African drumming, jazz, and funk—the musical explored themes of survival and revolution.

largest theatres.

# **"A SPLENDID PRODUCTION** NOT TO BE MISSED"

# **A PERFORMANCE YOU** WILL REMEMBER FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

-MARYLAND THEATRE GUIDE

-THE WASHINGTON POST

### AFTER VERY SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATIONS IN 2016

The Round House Theatre/Olney Theatre Center co-production was the very first regional non-profit production of Fela!, and the first time the musical had been performed since its national tour over a decade ago. The show was massively successful, and was extended for two weeks-a testament to the power of this continuing partnership between Montgomery County's two

-BROADWAY WORLD



# EDUCATION

t Round House Theatre Education, we approach theatre as a multi-arts discipline. We challenge our students to develop their skills not just in acting, but in movement, design, and playmaking—all vital components to telling stories through theatre. We encourage our students to develop and express their own artistic voices and are proud to give them the platform to tell their stories on our stage.

# SUMMER CAMP

Round House Theatre Education began the fiscal year with a great summer, offering nine weeks of in-person summer camps to almost 600 registrants ranging from age 4 to 18 across three Round House spaces.

Our **DESTINATIONS** program for students entering grades K through 3 was offered at the Round House Education Center and featured a different theme each week. Students used their imaginations to travel to destinations as varied as Insectopia, Bricksburg, the Amazon rain forest, Superhero City, and even a certain Galaxy, Far, Far Away.

The **PLAYMAKERS** camp for students entering grades 4 through 6 had sessions in both Bethesda and Silver Spring. Playmakers met for two-week themed sessions, with two programmatic options. One offered students the experience of writing, designing, rehearsing and performing a live production. The other offered students the chance to create, write, design, and shoot a film which was shared with family and friends.

The Round House **TEEN INSTITUTE** camps for students entering grades 6 through 12 covered a variety of specialized topics in theatre including Musical Theatre, Stage Combat, Filmmaking, Playwriting, Improvisation, and Stand-Up. Teen Institute focused on developing the individual voices and artistry of teen theatre-makers by bringing teens together with professional artists who are also outstanding teachers. Our faculty included Aaron Posner, Maboud Ebrahimzadeh, Bobby Smith, Casey Kaleba, Dani Stoller, and Kevin Corbett.

In the 2022-2023 Season, more than 1,600 students participated in Round House Theatre Education programming, and more than 7,000 students watched Round House Theatre performances.

"Addie has had a great time and I've been so impressed with everything she has told us about. You all are running a special place and we recommend it to our parent friends all the time. Thank you!"

Michael, Summer Camp Parent

"I'm writing to express my gratitude to Round House staff for Mighty Mysteries. Micah was door busting at camp nearly every morning. He to Know I Learned from Being a Zombie by Jason Pizzarello, had a great time! And it's amazing to watch him students. be himself around a bunch of other kids being **ADULTS** continued to take classes with some of Round themselves. It was so cool to see the progression House's favorite teaching artists including stage combat to Playmakers—it really showed that the with Casey Kaleba of Tooth and Claw Combat Arts and [teaching artists] and campers all worked hard to Kevin Corbett, formerly of the Capitol Steps and now The put on a fun and creative play!!" Capitol Fools.

Sage, Summer Camp Parent

"Thank you SO MUCH! Maisie LOVES camp at Round House. You all do such a masterful job. I, once again, was blown away by the movie. The amount of time, thought and energy that went into that camp and to editing the film is truly outstanding."

Erin, Summer Camp Parent

"This is great! Thank you for such a great camp this was Dalia's favorite this whole summer."

Susannah, Summer Camp Parent

# **ON SITE CLASSES AND DAYS OFF!**

Weekends brought more than 150 young students to the Education Center for various classes, from pre-K students exploring their creativity by playing animals, to middle school students trusting their instincts and finding their voices through improvisation.

OUR YOUNG ARTISTS PERFORMANCE COMPANY (YAPC) is a class designed to introduce students with some experience in theatre to the rehearsal and performance process. The Fall session of YAPC performed All I Really Need complete with well-distressed zombie-wear designed by the

Our **DAYS OFF!** program was back in full force this year. The program is designed to bring students to the Education Center when schools in Montgomery County are closed. More than two hundred students participated in our Days Off! program, enjoying days exploring Under the Big Top, Ant Island, Monster University, and Superhero City!





# **AFTER-SCHOOL CLASSES AND PRODUCTION RESIDENCIES**

Round House teaching artists taught after-school residencies to approximately 300 students in their own schools. Our year included 27 classes in 11 schools such as East Silver Spring, Kensington Parkwood, Green Acres, Sligo Creek, Somerset, Rock Creek Forest, and Westbrook Elementary Schools. Our after-school classes include offerings such as Dramatic Dinos, Fractured Fairytales, and Improvisation.

Our **PRODUCTION RESIDENCY PROGRAM** worked with 160 students in three schools to produce shows including Disney's The Aristocats KIDS! with 5th grade students at Westbrook Elementary, Dreamworks' Madagascar - A Musical Adventure JR. at Cabin John Middle School, and All I Really Need to Know I Learned From Being a Zombie by Jason Pizzarello at Westland Middle School.

# **TEEN NIGHTS AND FREE PLAY**

Our **TEEN NIGHTS** hosted over 200 students—including a performance of *The Tempest* which was packed with high school students. They were wowed by the show and couldn't stop asking questions of the cast members who joined them for post-show ice cream in the lobby. An additional 1,600 high school and college students attended Round House productions at no cost through our **FREE PLAY** program.





# **STUDENT MATINEES**

We had a wonderful series of **STUDENT MATINEES** during our 2022-2023 Season. Students from 23 different schools were able to attend in-person performances of *Nine Night*, The Tempest, Girlhood, or August Wilson's Radio Golf. In addition, we were able to provide The Tempest virtually to schools for use in the classroom. Almost 5,400 students representing more than 100 schools were able to attend the show virtually. While many of the schools were in our area, this allowed us to serve students from places like North Carolina, Texas, and even Australia.

## PRAISE FROM LOCAL TEACHERS

- "I am absolutely thrilled with this program.
- It was such a high-quality show for such an
- amazing price! I really hope you continue to
- offer similar programs in future years, as I
- would love to come back."

"A simple thank you to all of you at the Round House Theatre who made this event possible. This was, truly, one of the best shows I have seen, and our students were positively glowing after our matinee."

"Please continue this work—this was so awesome. I am thankful that we were able to get students into a theatre, most for the first time, and that they were able to see an August Wilson play. I appreciated this programming, and I thought that the story was easy for students to connect to as we live in an area. with lots of redevelopment."

"The Tempest is amazing. I have been around and seen plenty of Shakespeare but nothing that brings his words alive like [this production]."

"Round House seems to be doing everything right to encourage the next generation of theatre patrons. The students really enjoyed their experience and continued to discuss it on their own post performance. Several students remarked that they were going to bring their parents back to the show. Thank you for all 🗧 that you do."

"Thank you so much it was a wonderful show and it is an amazing opportunity 🗧 for a field trip."

## **APPRENTICES AND INTERNS**

As part of our mission to be a Theatre for Everyone, Round House is committed to training the next generation of theatre administrators and practitioners. Our apprentice program has become one of the most popular avenues for early career professionals to benefit from on-the-job training to further their career in professional theatre. Apprentices work 25-40 hours a week throughout the season in a department of their choosing and gain hands-on experience with the theatre's daily operations, learning alongside an accomplished company of artists, teachers, and administrators. We had five excellent members of the apprentice class this season: Lila Cooper (Education Apprentice), Morgan Fuller (Arts Management Apprentice), Amanda Gever (Costume Shop/ Wardrobe Apprentice), Kira Kerr (Stage Management Apprentice), and Shana Laski (Artistic Apprentice).

In addition to our apprentice program, we hosted five college interns who worked with us during the summer, as well as 16 summer Teen Educators and several additional high school interns. We also hosted our first Summer RISE Student through a partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY AT ROUND HOUSE

# **A Progress Report**

Round House Theatre continues to develop our commitments to anti-racism and set of programs and policies aimed at making Round House a true theatre for everyone.

As part of our commitment to auditing our progress on at least an annual basis, an update on our EDIA work is published each year in our Annual Report.

# Regular and ongoing discussion and efforts have continued among our full staff and Board, and there are a number of updates we would like to highlight and share with you on the following pages.

INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

- enhance participant understanding.
- offers direct access to our anti-racism training for all contractors.
- resources spotlight websites endorsed by tribal leaders.

# COMMUNITY EVENTS

- storytelling.
- fostering a welcoming environment for them to experience a production by Black artists.

# ON THE HOUSE

Oasis, Community Bridges, and many others.

 Round House Theatre initiated anti-racism training for its entire staff and artists, curated in collaboration with Michael Bobbitt (Executive Director of the Mass Cultural Council, former Artistic Director of New Repertory Theatre and Adventure Theatre-MTC). This comprehensive, self-guided program delves into anti-racism, implicit bias, and bystander intervention, and is followed by group discussions to further

• The Theatre's Code of Conduct has been revised to encapsulate expectations regarding equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. It now features a section addressing prejudiced attitudes and behaviors and

• Our Land Acknowledgement has been refined to shift from a colonial perspective on land ownership towards an indigenous understanding and acknowledges the migratory patterns of several tribal groups. Updated

 Native American & Indigenous Night for On the Far End hosted community guests, including members of notable indigenous organizations, accompanied by performances of Muscogee hymns and traditional

• The inaugural Black Out Night for *Radio Golf* was crafted to celebrate Black-identifying audience members,

• Through our On the House program, we collaborated with many esteemed partners to ensure our work is accessible to our local communities. These partners included: The Fenwick Foundation, the Canady Foundation for the Arts, Mercies Home to Home, Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO Americas), Silver Spring Village, Inc., Easterseals DC MD VA, Bethesda Metro Area Village, Washington Metropolitan



# RACIAL EQUITY PLAN

 Round House Theatre's Racial Equity Plan represents a profound commitment to fostering a diverse, inclusive theatre environment. Anchored in its core values as an anti-racist organization, the theatre aspires to be a multicultural hub, championing voices historically marginalized in the theatre realm. This three-year, dynamic plan emphasizes transparency, accessibility, and collaboration, involving every member from staff to Board. By increasing BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) representation and tearing down barriers of race, gender, and economics, Round House is steadfast in its mission to be a beacon of change in American theatre, inviting everyone to partake in its transformative journey towards racial equity.

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In our ongoing efforts to learn more and strengthen our relationships with members of our local community, and to work towards dismantling the harmful effects of white supremacy and colonization, Round House acknowledges that our theatre, administrative offices, education center, and production shop are located on unceded land cared for by native tribes including the Piscataway peoples. We pay our respects to the Piscataway community and their elders both past and present, as well as future generations.

We also acknowledge that, as the world experiences the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us are using the internet and other technologies that are not as readily available or accessible in present day indigenous communities.

We pledge to do the work necessary to build relationships with sovereign tribal nations, to ensure that Round House becomes a more inclusive space, and to never cease ongoing learning.

#### Learn more about the Piscataway tribe: PiscatawayConoyTribe.com

Support indigenous rights organizations on a national or global level: Native American Rights Fund: NARF.org Cultural Survival: Cultural Survival.org Indigenous Environmental Network: IENEarth.org

#### WHAT IS A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT?

A land acknowledgment is a formal statement that recognizes and respects Indigenous peoples as the traditional stewards of a given geographic area. We share ours as part of Round House's ongoing efforts toward equity and anti-racism.

# THEATRE



At Round House, "Theatre for Everyone" isn't just a statement. It's our mission and an organizational value. It means that everyone—patrons, artists, staff, students, trustees, and volunteers—is invited to fully participate and deserves to be treated with respect. This is our promise to you...and we ask you to help us uphold these values and expectations in all of your interactions with Round House.

#### We believe that...

- All are welcome here, and each person is empowered an encouraged to fully engage with our work.
- · Everyone is a human being, equally deserving of respec
- Theatre is an "empathy gym," and building that muscle what each of us is here to do.
- Anti-racism—the intentional and conscious effort to combat racial prejudice and systemic and structural racism—is an ongoing and active practice, and we must stand against oppression and marginalization of all kin
- Discomfort is often productive, but cruelty never is.

#### We invite you to...

- Assume positive intent and expect the same assumption in return.
- Enjoy our art with your whole self—laugh, clap, cry, have reactions!-and embrace your fellow audience members' reactions in turn. Remember that your experience is shared with the rest of the audience.
- Make a deliberate effort to confront your own biases, and partner with us to help make Round House a welcoming space for everyone. We're all learning!
- Help us create a positive community and a culture of collaboration.

# HOUSE RULES

#### We will not tolerate...

nd	<ul> <li>Insulting or discriminatory speech towards anyone.</li> </ul>
ct. is	• Unwanted invasion of another person's physical space.
	Abusive or harassing behavior.
	• Ignoring or talking over staff who are trying to assist you.
	• Creating a hostile environment for fellow audience members, students, artists, or staff.
t all ds.	• Disrespect of or damage to our theatre or other facilities.

WE ARE GLAD YOU'RE HERE! Thank you for being a part of the Round House community as we work together to truly be a Theatre For Everyone.

If you witness or experience behavior that violates the values and expectations outlined above, please alert our staff. **Round House will take action to protect** our community, with consequences up to and including removal from **Round House activities.** 



# DONOR EVENTS

During the 2022-2023 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.

## **INSIDE LOOKS**

Inside Looks are our most popular donor benefit. These conversations with playwrights, directors, actors, and creative teams are led by Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and offer an opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of each play. Donors hear from the cast about how they create their characters, learn the inspirations and research behind the set. costumes, lighting, and sound design, and gain insight into the director's artistic vision. Each Inside Look concludes with a catered reception in the Round House lobby and the chance to talk with the artists. The Tempest Inside Look was especially well-attended and participants came away buzzing about what was soon to be Round House's best-selling show in our history!





## **OPENING NIGHTS**

Round House Opening Nights celebrate the hard work of the cast and creative team and offer Leadership Circle donors the opportunity to enjoy a festive and exciting atmosphere while also enjoying a pre-show dinner in our Event Room, VIP reception in the lobby, and postshow dessert receptions. This season, we were honored to welcome Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch to Opening Night of *On the Far End*, a play based on McGirt v. Oklahoma, in which Justice Gorsuch authored the majority opinion. Round House was also grateful to welcome members of the Muscogee Creek Nation, including Chief David Hill and First Lady Monica Hill, and Attorney General Geri Wisner.

# BACKSTAGE TOURS AND TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

Backstage Tours and Technical Rehearsals are a highlight of Round House's behind-the-scenes events. They provide insight into the many aspects that go into producing a show on the Round House stage, especially during our National Capital New Play Festival, during which our talented production team switched between sets for *On the Far End* and *Jennifer Who is Leaving* multiple times each week!

Donors were delighted to witness DC-area favorites Floyd King, Nancy Robinette, and Kimberly Gilbert rehearse on stage during the Technical Rehearsal for *Jennifer Who Is Leaving*. The National Capital New Play Festival backstage tour revealed which donuts from that play were fake and which were real—and how our supremely gifted Scenic Charge, Jen Cockerham, created the realistic outdoors in *On the Far End*.

## **BROADWAY IN BETHESDAGALA**

On May 13, 2023, Round House held its annual Broadway in Bethesda Gala featuring Tony award-winner Laura Benanti. Thanks to sponsors and supporters, more than \$280,000 was raised in support of Round House programs, including our Theatre for Everyone initiative, which allows us to build a sustainable foundation for more than 20 programs that bring a wide range of stories to our stage and classrooms, a broad array of artists and students to our theatre, and a diverse audience into our seats, in order to create a sustainable theatre of tomorrow. Learn more at RoundHouseTheatre.org/TFE.

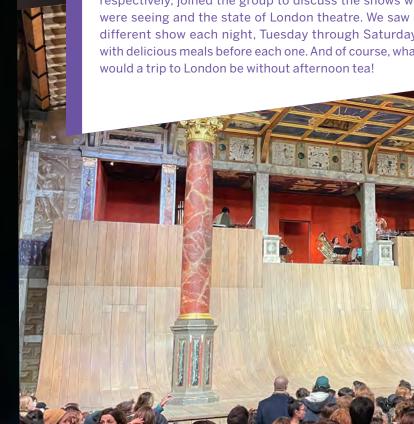
The evening was catered by Susan Gage Caterers with stunning florals by Chevy Chase Florist. Round House extends our deepest thanks to Gala Co-Chairs Ann & Neil Kerwin and Joy Lewis for their leadership and helping to make the event a success.

## LONDON TOUR

In October 2022, Round House returned to London for our annual Theatre Tour, following a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic. There was so much interest for this year's London Tour we added a second week to accommodate the demand!

Over the two weeks, two separate groups of Round House Trustees, donors, and patrons enjoyed the best of London theatre, top restaurants, and special behind-the-scenes interviews and tours, along with the beloved post-show group conversations led by Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Managing Director Ed Zakreski. We returned to the Sea Containers hotel following our last trip in 2019 and enjoyed beautiful views of the River Thames from the posh, private apartment reserved for our evening gatherings.

Both tours alternated between West End theatres and those on the South Bank. To kick off each week, The *Guardian* theatre critics Arifa Akbar and Michael Billington, respectively, joined the group to discuss the shows we were seeing and the state of London theatre. We saw a different show each night, Tuesday through Saturday, with delicious meals before each one. And of course, what would a trip to London be without afternoon tea!





# FINANCIALS

Round House Theatre's financial picture for fiscal year 2023 reflects the challenges that many regional theatres across the country face in the aftermath of a global pandemic that continues to have seismic impacts on how audiences experience art and even how people live in society. We produced the best-selling show in Round House history, but even that massive success was not enough to offset dramatic increases in the cost of producing theatre and audiences that remain smaller than pre-pandemic levels.

As government-funded pandemic relief programs came to an end, we began to assess changes to the traditional regional theatre business model that would support investments in our art and in our community while building a sustainable future. The significant surplus resulting from successful long-term fundraising efforts and prudent financial management in fiscal year 2021 helped to absorb losses resulting from show cancellations and continued need for pandemic-related health and safety protocols for the second consecutive year. We launched a Business Model Task Force to ensure that our programming aligns with changes in audience behavior and our Theatre for Everyone campaign is building a base of financial support for an array of 20+ programs that promote equity and accessibility in American theatre. During a time of great uncertainty for the field, Round House is committed to making sustainable changes in how we produce great theatre so that we can continue to be a theatre for everyone for generations to come.

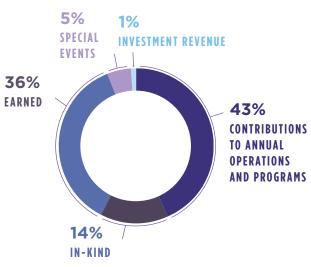


## FISCAL YEAR 2023 (JUL 1, 2022 - JUN 30, 2023)

## **REVENUE AND SUPPORT**

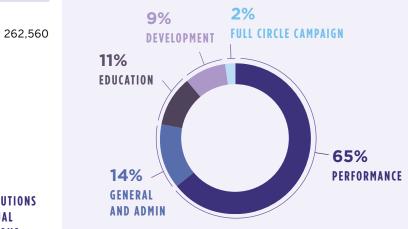
Earned Revenue	\$ 2,915,742	Performance	\$	6,141,565
(tickets, tuition, concessions, rental)		Education	\$	1,002,086
Grants and Contributions	\$ 3,480,647	General and Admin	\$	1,276,093
Special Events	\$ 398,217	Development	\$	854,345
In-kind	\$ 1,125,459	Full Circle Campaign	\$	170.401
Investment Revenue	\$ 83.947		Ψ	170,401
	/ -	TOTAL	\$	9,444,490
TOTAL	\$ 8,004,012			
Full Circle Campaign funds released		9% 2%		

Full Circle Campaign funds released \$ for fixed assets



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**



Our artistic and educational programming accounts for 76 percent of our total expenses.



# 2022-2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

(as of June 30, 2023)

# **STAFF LISTING**

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Artistic Director: Rvan Rilette Managing Director: Ed Zakreski

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# **DONOR SUPPORT**

(as of June 30, 2023)

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors who support the work of our 2022-2023 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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- JENNIFER WHO IS LEAVING: Photo of Floyd King (Joey), Nancy Robinette (Nan), Kimberly Gilbert (Jennifer), and Annie Fang (Lili) in Jennifer Who Is Leaving by Margot Schulman Photography.

Photography. AUGUST WILSON'S RADIO GOLF: Ro Boddie (Roosevelt Hicks) and JaBen Early (Harmond Wilks) in August Wilson's Radio Golf by Margot Schulman Photography. FELA!: Photo of Duain Richmond (Fela Kuti) and the ensemble of Fela! by Teresa Castracane. **EDUCATION:** Photos of summer camp students; photo of Nate Dendy (Ariel, The Tempest) talking with Teen Night attendees; photo of a student matinee; photo of summer camp students. All photos by Danisha Crosby.

ON THE FAR END: Photo of Mary Kathryn Nagle (Jean Hill Chaudhuri) by Margot Schulman

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  - tour of Jennifer Who Is Leaving.

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- BROADWAY IN BETHESDA GALA: Photo of Laura Benanti; photo of Laura Benanti, Neil Kerwin, and Ann Kerwin; photo of Barbara Rhoden, Joy Lewis, and Michael Faison. All photos by Cameron Whitman Photography.
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