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ROUND HOUSE THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2022-2023 SEASON

**45th SEASON INCLUDES AMERICAN PREMIERE OF WEST END HIT,
MAGICAL ADAPTATION OF SHAKESPEARE'S *THE TEMPEST*,
SECOND ANNUAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL WITH TWO WORLD PREMIERES,
A RETURN TO AUGUST WILSON'S AMERICAN CENTURY CYCLE, AND MORE**

BETHESDA, Md., April 27, 2022 – Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Managing Director Ed Zakreski are thrilled to announce the full six-show lineup for Round House Theatre's 45th Season. Following a transformative season of performances—including three regional premieres, the inaugural year of the National Capital New Play Festival, and the world premieres of Tim J. Lord's "*We declare you a terrorist...*" and Charly Evon Simpson's "*it's not a trip it's a journey*"—Round House is excited for audiences to return and experience a celebration of live theatre, with a slate of shows designed to remind them of the power, joy, and necessity of this art form.

"Whether through spectacle or through simple direct connection between performer and audience, this is a season that demands to be experienced in person, sharing space and responses with other human beings," Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette** shares. "The last two years have seen so many transformations, and we are still engaged in valuable conversations about what our post-pandemic world will be. Important changes are needed in theatre and in society as a whole, and Round House hopes that the stories we tell are part of those necessary explorations."

THE 2022-2023 Season

The season begins with the US premiere of *Nine Night* (September 14 – October 9, 2022) by **Natasha Gordon**, who became the first Black British female playwright on the West End with the play's triumphant 2018 transfer from the National Theatre. Gordon's debut play (named "one of the top 20 plays of the 21st century by *The Guardian*") centers on the traditional Jamaican funerary celebration of "Nine Nights" as a British-Jamaican family unites to mark the passing of its matriarch. **Timothy Douglas** will direct this uproarious and touching

exploration of family and grief, making its highly anticipated American premiere after postponement in the 2021-2022 season due to COVID-19.

Round House audiences will then experience a version of William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (November 23, 2022 – January 15, 2023) unlike any they've seen before. Adapted and directed by **Teller (of Penn & Teller) and Aaron Posner**, this literally magical staging reinvigorates one of Shakespeare's most popular plays in a stunning production running through the holiday season, produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre. The blend of magic, music by iconic songwriter Tom Waits, and movement by boundary-defying dance troupe Pilobolus is a theatrical spectacle that demands to be experienced in person and—as experienced by sold-out audiences across the country—is a *Tempest* like no other.

Round House will continue its commitment to producing compelling new work with the second annual **National Capital New Play Festival** (see page 3 for additional information), headlined by a pair of world premieres presented in rotating repertory. A Round House Theatre Equal Play Commission, ***On the Far End*** (March 28 – May 7, 2023) by **Mary Kathryn Nagle** showcases a virtuosic solo performance that weaves one woman's life story together with the history of promises the United States has made and broken with our sovereign indigenous neighbors. In the hilarious dark comedy ***Jennifer, Who Is Leaving*** (March 30 – May 7, 2023), written and directed by **Morgan Gould**, we're confronted with the expectations with which we burden women. The two world premieres follow developmental readings at Round House as part of the 2022 National Capital New Play Festival.

Following the festival, Round House is thrilled to continue its longstanding relationship with America's greatest playwright with a production of **August Wilson's *Radio Golf*** (June 7 – July 2, 2023), the final play of his American Century Cycle, directed by **Reginald Douglas**. Following productions of *Two Trains Running* (2014) and *Gem of the Ocean* (2018), Round House returns to Pittsburgh's Hill District in 1997, where the play follows a Black businessman and mayoral candidate whose political ambitions are complicated by his family legacy and by his efforts to renew his local neighborhood through real estate development. *Radio Golf* premiered in 2005, but it still demands conversation on relevant issues 20 years later: police violence, gentrification, the intersection of class and race, and questions of division and solidarity within the Black community.

To close the season, Round House Theatre will engage in the first part of an exhilarating two-year partnership with Olney Theatre Center to produce the Broadway musical ***Fela!*** (July 7 – August 13, 2023), the spirited, joyful story of musician, activist, and global superstar Fela Anikulapo Kuti. With **music and lyrics by Fela Kuti**

and **book by Bill T. Jones and Tim Lewis**, this is the first professional production anywhere in the world since its national tour more than ten years ago. Directed by **Lili-Anne Brown**, this Tony Award-winning and Grammy-nominated story of rebellion and individualism gives voice to what so many of us need in this moment. [Learn more about Round House Theatre and Olney Theatre Center's multi-season collaboration](#). See page 4 for full season production details.

National Capital New Play Festival

In April 2022, Round House launched the inaugural year of the National Capital New Play Festival, a regional celebration of new plays that will be an annual part of the Theatre's programming. In service of Round House's longstanding investment in diversifying the voices that are amplified through live theatre, the festival seeks to nurture relationships with both established and early-career playwrights while cultivating an interest in new work among audiences in the DC metro area and demystifying the new play development process.

The 2023 festival will feature two **world premiere productions** (*On the Far End* and *Jennifer, Who Is Leaving*) presented in rotating repertory as part of the mainstage season, as well as four plays presented as **developmental readings** (titles to be announced), and **panel discussions**. Full schedule and details will be announced at a later date.

The 21st Annual Sarah Metzger Memorial Play

Established by the Metzger family and friends to celebrate the memory of Sarah Metzger, an inspiring and active member of the theatre community who was killed in an automobile accident during her freshman year of college, the "Sarah Play" is the culminating performance of the **Teen Performance Company** each year. Following a year of training, master classes with artists working in the field, and behind-the-scenes access to Round House productions, the TPC members direct, design, stage manage, and perform a full production on the Round House stage. Next season's Teen Performance Company production is inspired by the work of photographer Justine Kurland. Dani Stoller's ***Girlhood*** is a glimpse into the lives of a group of teenage girls as they leave childhood behind and try to figure out what comes next. More details about this world premiere commission will be shared at a later date.

"With two world premieres, an American premiere, a spectacular interpretation of a beloved classic, and an all-too-current revival, this is a season full of new and reimagined stories for a new world," adds Managing Director **Ed Zakreski**. "While the stories may be different, the power of live performance to connect us and open the doors to new conversations is unchanged. We can't wait to see you at the theatre."

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2022-2023 SEASON DETAILS

ONE OF THE TOP 20 PLAYS OF THE 21ST CENTURY*

Nine Night

By Natasha Gordon

Directed by Timothy Douglas | US Premiere

SEP 14 – OCT 9, 2022

Family matriarch Gloria has died, and her family gathers for the traditional Jamaican Nine Night, a multi-day celebration full of food, revelry, and a nonstop parade of mourners. Natasha Gordon’s debut play—a popular triumph in its 2018 National Theatre premiere and subsequent West End run—explores the tensions of inhabiting two cultures, 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. Raved *The Guardian*’s Michael Billington, “Playwrighting debuts don’t come much better than this.”

**The Guardian*

CLASSICAL TALE MAGICALLY REIMAGINED

The Tempest

By William Shakespeare

Adapted and directed by Aaron Posner & Teller

NOV 23 – JAN 15, 2023 | Produced in collaboration with Folger Theatre

Adapted and directed by Aaron Posner and Teller (of Penn & Teller fame), an unforgettable reimagining of Shakespeare’s most enchanting romance features haunting music from the catalog of iconic songwriter Tom Waits and mind-bending moves from Pilobolus, as well as astonishing feats of magic. Arriving just in time for the holiday season, the dazzling production—a smash hit in Boston, Chicago, and Las Vegas—“awakens in the audience a sense of pleasurable, almost childlike wonder,” says *The New York Times*. “Enormously entertaining,” raves the *Chicago Tribune*.

A NATIVE AMERICAN ACTIVIST’S TRUE STORY

On the Far End

By Mary Kathryn Nagle

Directed by Margot Bordelon

MAR 28 – MAY 7, 2023 | World Premiere

Muscogee leader Ella Jean Hill traces her family’s history from the Trail of Tears to her grandfather’s allotment in central Oklahoma. In an astonishing one-woman play, she shares her story—the Native boarding school she fled on foot, her marriage to a young Bengali scholar, and the advocacy that became her life’s work. With *On the Far End*, a reference to the landmark 2020 Supreme Court opinion in *McGirt v. Oklahoma* that upheld the sovereignty of the Muscogee territories, one of America’s leading playwrights (*Sovereignty; Manhatta*) weaves a deeply personal account of one family—her own mother-in-law’s—and a legacy of broken promises between nations. (*Part of the National Capital New Play Festival*)

A Round House Theatre Equal Play Commission

WITTY DARK COMEDY

Jennifer, Who Is Leaving

Written and directed by Morgan Gould

MAR 30 – MAY 7, 2023 | World Premiere

Nan is working the night shift, fielding periodic calls from her retired husband with questions about reheating dinner and where his car keys are. Jennifer is trying to tune out Joey, her elderly patient who is relishing getting on her last nerve. And Lili is stressing out about her upcoming SATs. Set in a Dunkin Donuts on the side of a Massachusetts highway, *Jennifer, Who Is Leaving* is a familiar and hilarious exploration of the expectations placed on women; the physical, mental, and emotional labor of being a caregiver; and what happens when we reach our breaking point. (*Part of the National Capital New Play Festival*)

HISTORY & PROGRESS COLLIDE

August Wilson’s

Radio Golf

Directed by Reginald Douglas

JUNE 7 – JULY 2, 2023

Following *Two Trains Running* (2014) and *Gem of the Ocean* (2018), Round House returns to Pittsburgh’s Hill District, where Harmond Wilkes is redeveloping the struggling neighborhood with business partner (and golf enthusiast) Roosevelt Hicks while running to become the city’s first Black mayor. With a shiny new high-rise planned and Whole Foods set to move in, one house stands in the way: 1839 Wylie Avenue, home of Wilson’s renowned Aunt Ester. As Roosevelt aims to win the game that has been set against him all his life, Harmond reaches a crossroads as history and progress collide. “Surprising, suspenseful, and crowd-

rousing” (*New York Times*), *Radio Golf* concludes this stunning cycle of plays portraying 20th-century Black life by one of America’s most influential playwrights.

TONY AWARD-WINNING MUSICAL

Fela!

Music and lyrics by Fela Kuti

Book by Bill T. Jones and Jim Lewis

Directed by Lili-Anne Brown

JULY 8 – AUG 13, 2023 | Performed at and Co-Produced with Olney Theatre Center

Round House Theatre and Olney Theatre Center combine forces for an epic co-production of the award-winning musical *Fela!*, the first professional production anywhere in the world since its national tour more than ten years ago. It’s 1978, and we meet musician, activist, and global superstar Fela Anikulapo Kuti at his farewell show at the Afrika Shrine nightclub in Lagos, Nigeria. After losing his own mother in a dictator’s violent attack, Fela’s final act in Nigeria is to use his iconic music—a spirited blend of traditional African drumming, jazz, and funk—to tell his story of survival and global revolution through Afrobeat and floor-shaking dance. The Tony Award-winning and Grammy-nominated musical “captures the spirit of rebellion...that dwells within all of us” (*The New York Times*) in the inspiring true story of one man’s fight against corruption and oppression.

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TICKET INFORMATION

Subscription packages for Round House Theatre’s 2022-2023 Season are now available for purchase online at **RoundHouseTheatre.org**, or by calling the Box Office at **240.644.1100**. Subscribers enjoy the best prices and the best seats on their preferred night, with benefits including free ticket exchanges, waived single ticket fees, and more. Tickets for individual productions will be available for sale in mid July.

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 and youth.

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