



ROUND HOUSE THEATRE ANNOUNCES 2025-2026 SEASON

48TH SEASON INCLUDES THE DC-AREA PREMIERE OF A MODERN EPIC, A MAGICAL WORLD PREMIERE, A U.S. PREMIERE HOLIDAY COMEDY, THE LATEST WORK FROM A PULITZER-WINNING PLAYWRIGHT, THE FIFTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CAPITAL NEW PLAY FESTIVAL, AND MORE

BETHESDA, Md., February 27, 2025—Artistic Director Ryan Rilette and Managing Director Ed Zakreski are thrilled to announce Round House Theatre’s 2025-2026 Season. The lineup will introduce audiences to four new-to-DC plays, with the regional premiere of the most honored play in a generation, a celebrated British holiday comedy, a world premiere magic show from the creators of *The Tempest*, and the newest hit by a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright. The season celebrates the power of storytelling and theatricality while reflecting Round House’s ongoing commitment to amplifying diverse voices and stories in the American theatre community.

“The epic, thought-provoking, awe-inspiring comedies, dramedies, and magic shows in our 2025-2026 Season explore how our stories define us and how our history influences our present,” says Artistic Director Ryan Rilette. “With shows that are sure to make you laugh, cry, and gasp in wonder, this is a season not to be missed!”

The 2025-2026 season opens with the regional premiere of ***The Inheritance, Parts One and Two***, by **Matthew López** and directed by **Tom Story (August – October 2025)**. Inspired by the 1910 novel *Howards End* by E. M. Forster, it premiered in London in 2018 before transferring to Broadway in 2019, eventually becoming the most honored American play of its generation, having received multiple "Best Play" awards in London and New York (including Tony, Olivier,

and Drama Desk awards, among others). The modern classic follows a group of young gay men in New York as they navigate themes of love, legacy, and the impact of the AIDS crisis.

Profoundly moving and sharply humorous, this remarkable production explores the questions: What do we owe to those who came before us, and what will we leave behind? Round House's production of *The Inheritance* is made possible by an extraordinary gift from The Roy Cockrum Foundation, which enables theatres to reach beyond their normal scope of activities and undertake ambitious and creative productions.

This season's holiday show is the U.S. premiere of Sam Holcroft's ***Rules for Living (December 2025)***. Directed by Round House Artistic Director **Ryan Rilette**, this dark comedy—a raucous hit in its run at London's National Theater—explores family dysfunction and societal norms as a family prepares for Christmas lunch amidst rising tensions.

In January, Round House kicks off the fifth annual **National Capital New Play Festival (January 2026)** with the world premiere of ***Nothing Up My Sleeve***, written by *The Tempest* collaborators Aaron Posner (director) and Dendy (Ariel). Previously presented as a workshop in the 2024 Festival as *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, this captivating, family-friendly, one-man coming-of-age story and magic show—directed by Posner and performed by illusionist Dendy—delves into the history of magic while narrating Dendy's own journey to becoming a magician. The performance features a score of mind-blowing tricks and plenty of surprises, making it an excellent way to kick off the new year.

Round House Theatre will close the season with the regional premiere of the newest play by playwright legend **Suzan-Lori Parks** (the playwright behind last season's Helen Hayes Award-nominated *Topdog/Underdog*). ***Sally & Tom (May – June 2026)*** is a backstage dramedy about an off-off-off-Broadway theatre company as they stage a production about Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson. The playwright herself portrays Sally, while her partner directs and plays Tom. Art and reality intertwine as rehearsals progress, revealing profound truths about race, power, and art.

National Capital New Play Festival

Round House will continue its commitment to producing compelling new work with the fifth annual National Capital New Play Festival with the world premiere of *Nothing Up My Sleeve* in January 2026. Four plays will feature in the Festival as part of the reading series. More details will follow later this year.

In April 2022, Round House launched the inaugural National Capital New Play Festival, a regional celebration of new plays that forms 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 24th 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 will be announced at a later date.

"We are thrilled to introduce DMV audiences to a lineup of fantastic plays that celebrate the power of great stories and the magic of theatre. I am especially grateful to the Roy Cockrum Foundation for their extraordinary support of *The Inheritance*." adds Managing Director Ed Zakreski. "I hope to see you at Round House for a season of joy and connection."

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2025-2026 SEASON DETAILS

Poetic American Epic

THE INHERITANCE, PARTS ONE AND TWO

By Matthew Lopez

Inspired by the novel *Howards End* by E.M. Forster

Directed by Tom Story

AUGUST – OCTOBER 2025 | Regional Premiere

Round House Theatre proudly presents *The Inheritance*—the most awarded play of our generation— performed in a breathtaking two-part theatrical event. Winner of the Tony, Olivier, Drama Desk, Critics’ Circle, Evening Standard, and Drama League Awards for Best Play, Matthew López’s epic masterpiece instantly became a modern classic. Hailed as “a vast, heartfelt, and hugely ambitious” (*The Guardian*) work, *The Inheritance* follows a group of young gay men in New York as they wrestle with love, legacy, and the shadow of the AIDS crisis. Deeply moving and biting funny, this unforgettable production asks: What do we owe those who came before us, and what will we leave behind? Presented in repertory, Parts One and Two create an extraordinary, once-in-a-lifetime experience. “The best American play of the century so far” (*The Telegraph*), *The Inheritance* is more than a play—it’s an event that will stay with you forever.

**The Inheritance* is made possible by a generous grant from The Roy Cockrum Foundation.

Hilarious Holiday Farce

RULES FOR LIVING

By Sam Holcroft

Directed by Ryan Rilette

DECEMBER 2025 | U.S. Premiere

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

Magical World Premiere

NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE...

Simple Deceptions for Curious Humans

By Aaron Posner & Dendy

Magic by Dendy

Directed by Aaron Posner

FEBRUARY – MARCH 2026 | World Premiere

Master illusionist Dendy and acclaimed playwright/director Aaron Posner reunite after their smash-hit collaboration on *The Tempest* for a spellbinding new one-person show. Part dazzling magic act, part deeply personal journey, *Nothing Up My Sleeve* pulls back the curtain on the history of magic while exploring Dendy's own path to becoming a magician. Prepare to be amazed, inspired, and transported into a world where the impossible becomes reality. Featuring captivating storytelling, jaw-dropping tricks, and mind-bending surprises, this exhilarating experience will leave audiences of all ages believing in magic again.

Ferocious and Funny Dramey

SALLY & TOM

By Suzan-Lori Parks

Directed by Timothy Douglas

MAY – JUNE 2026 | Regional Premiere

Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Suzan-Lori Parks (*Topdog/Underdog*) delivers a “hilarious and harrowing nesting doll of a play” (*New York Times*) in *Sally & Tom*, a bold, whip-smart theatrical rollercoaster. A scrappy theatre group is staging a play about Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson, with the playwright playing Sally and her partner directing and playing Tom. What could possibly go wrong? As art and life collide, rehearsals spiral into chaos, unearthing powerful truths about race, power, and art. By turns funny, gut-wrenching, and unflinchingly honest, *Sally & Tom* is a bold and entertaining explosion of the stories we tell about America's not-so-distant past that will stay with you long after the final bow.

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TICKET INFORMATION

Subscription packages for Round House Theatre's 2024-2025 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 50,000 patrons each year at our theatre in Bethesda. Round House has been nominated for 231 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 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.

ABOUT THE ROY COCKRUM FOUNDATION

Founded in 2014 by Roy Cockrum and Benita Hofstetter Koman with winnings from Mr. Cockrum's Powerball lottery jackpot, the Foundation's mission is to award grants to support world-class performing arts projects in not-for-profit professional theatres throughout America. Since 2014, the Foundation has awarded 51 grants to 42 American theatres. Inspiration for its mission derives from a Camus quote: "Without culture, and the relative freedom it implies, society, even when perfect, is but a jungle. This is why any authentic creation is a gift to the future." — Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*.

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