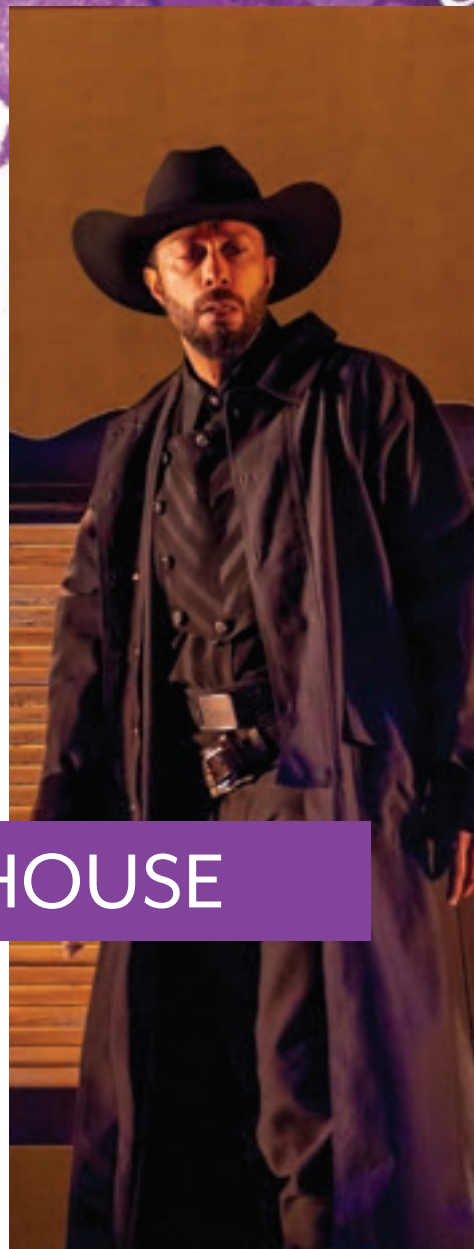
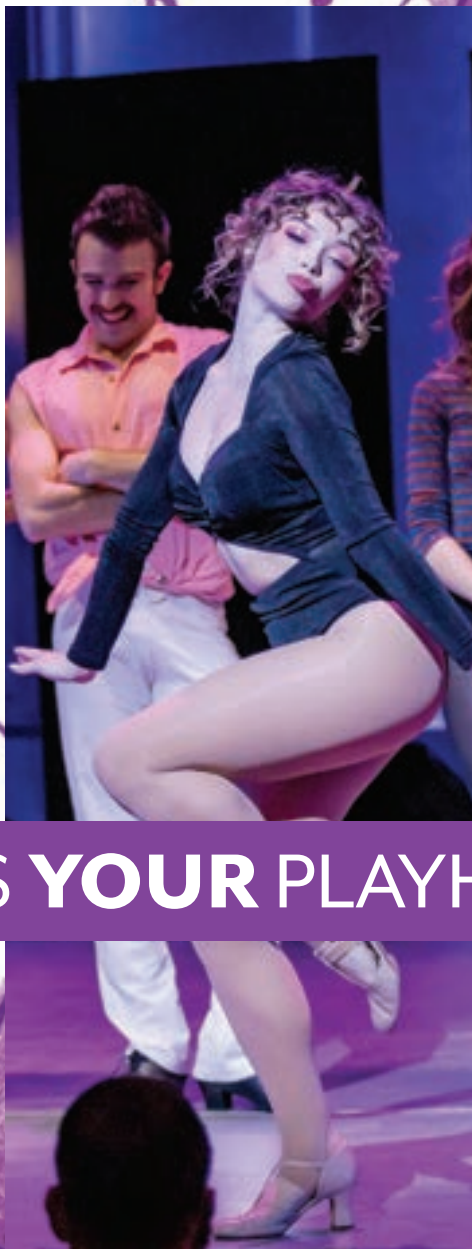
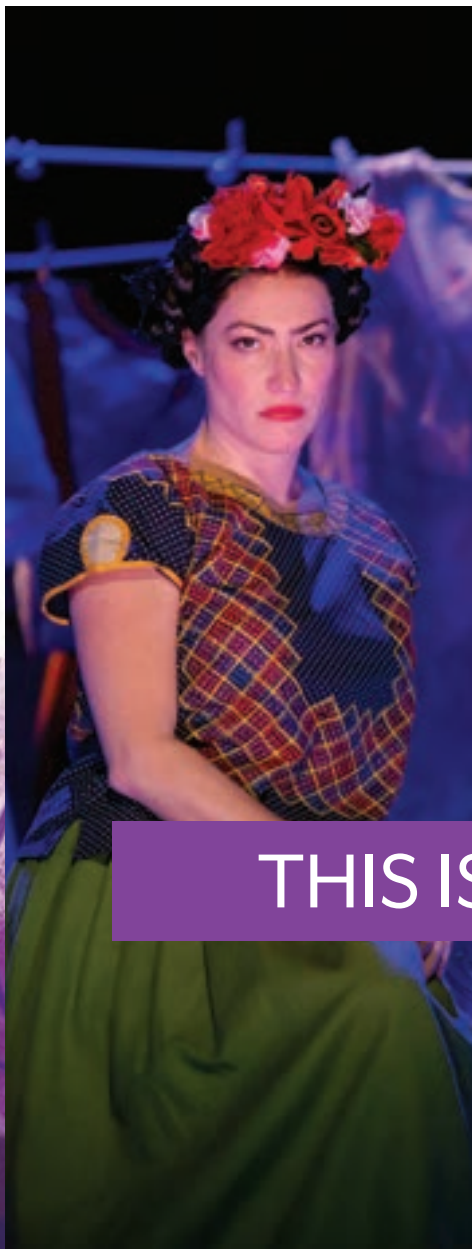


# ANNUAL REPORT

2022-23



THIS IS **YOUR** PLAYHOUSE

PLAY IN THE PARK  
CINCINNATI **HOUSE**

## MOE AND JACK'S PLACE — THE ROUSE THEATRE 2022-23 SEASON



### AGATHA CHRISTIE'S **MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS**

Adapted for the stage by KEN LUDWIG

**SEPT. 25 – OCT. 23, 2022**

Jarson-Kaplan Theater at the Aronoff Center for the Arts

Sponsored by U.S. BANK

*Whodunit?* Detective Hercule Poirot is determined to find out in this masterpiece from the world's most popular mystery writer.



THE SINGULAR SENSATIONS present

### **A CHORUS LINE**

Conceived and Originally Directed and Choreographed by MICHAEL BENNETT

Book by JAMES KIRKWOOD and NICHOLAS DANTE

Music by MARVIN HAMLISCH

Lyrics by EDWARD KLEBAN

**MARCH 11 – APRIL 14, 2023**

Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre

Celebrate the grand opening of our new theatre with the sensational, Tony Award®-winning musical that bursts with artistic passion.



THE CAROL ANN AND RALPH V. HAILE, JR. FOUNDATION presents

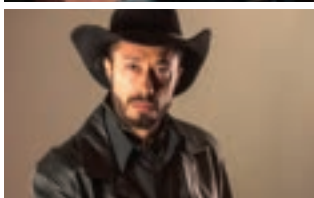
### AUGUST WILSON'S

### **SEVEN GUITARS**

**APRIL 22 – MAY 14, 2023**

Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre

With live blues and lyrical dialogue, August Wilson's Tony Award®-winning play promises a soulful exploration of the ties that bind and the chords that hold us together.



### **SHANE**

By KAREN ZACARÍAS

**JUNE 3 – 25, 2023**

Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre

Sponsored by JOHNSON INVESTMENT COUNSEL and CLARK SCHAEFER HACKETT

**WORLD PREMIERE!** One of the greatest Westerns of all time finds new life on the stage with a fresh perspective from acclaimed playwright Karen Zacarías.

## ROSENTHAL SHELTERHOUSE THEATRE 2022-23 SEASON



### **FRIDA...A SELF PORTRAIT**

Written and Performed by VANESSA SEVERO

**OCT. 15 – NOV. 6, 2022**

The Carnegie, Covington, Kentucky

Sponsored by DIGI AND MIKE SCHUELER

Iconic Mexican painter Frida Kahlo comes to life onstage with breathtaking physicality and raw honesty in this stunningly creative production.



### **THE LION**

By BENJAMIN SCHEUER

**NOV. 12 – DEC. 4, 2022**

Warsaw Federal Incline Theater, Price Hill

Sponsored by CHEMED

Straight from the London stage for an exclusive engagement, a singer-songwriter shares the story of his family through heartrending monologues and original songs.



### **THE CHINESE LADY**

By LLOYD SUH

**MARCH 25 – APRIL 30, 2023**

Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre

Sponsored by OHIO NATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

*The Chinese Lady* is a darkly poetic yet whimsical story about Afong Moy — thought to be the first Chinese woman to step foot on U.S. soil in 1834.



### **ORIGIN STORY**

By NATHAN ALAN DAVIS

**MAY 20 – JUNE 25, 2023**

Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre

**WORLD PREMIERE!** With delightfully unexpected turns and an ensemble of endearing characters, *Origin Story* is a world premiere comedy about life's biggest questions and the surprising ways we find the answers.

The 2022-23 season is presented by SCHUELER GROUP and THE VONTZ FAMILY

Season Sponsor of New Work: THE ROSENTHAL FAMILY FOUNDATION

Photo of Andrew May as Hercule Poirot by Zach Rosing. The cast of *A Chorus Line* by ClintonBPhotography. Photo of Dimonte Henning in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* by Michael Brosilow. Photo of William DeMeritt as Shane by ClintonBPhotography. Photo of Vanessa Severo as Frida Kahlo by Brian Paulette. Photo of Max Alexander-Taylor by Michael Wharley. Photos of Sami Ma as Afong Moy and Amira Danan as Margaret by Tony Arrasmith/Arrasmith & Associates.



# LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



Dear Playhouse Family,

This year was unlike any Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park has experienced before.

As we began the season, our new building was under construction, our staff was scattered across three office locations, and all of the fall performances took place in three theatres throughout the community: *Murder on the Orient Express* in the Jarson-Kaplan Theater at the Aronoff; *Frida...A Self Portrait* at The Carnegie in Covington, Kentucky; and *The Lion* at the Warsaw Federal Incline Theater in East Price Hill's Incline District.

We were fortunate to be blessed with a very talented leadership group and staff who adapted beautifully to the many, many challenges as Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre emerged above the treetops of Eden Park.

In early March, the theatre opened with the showstopping production of *A Chorus Line*. The musical played to sold-out crowds and was a tremendous success. In addition, we were pleased to host more than 1,000 donors over the course of four Welcome Home events within the first month of opening the new building. The remainder of the season included four additional productions: two in the Rouse Theatre, August Wilson's *Seven Guitars* and a new adaptation of the Western *Shane*; and the Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre hosted two plays, *The Chinese Lady* and the world premiere *Origin Story*. Every mainstage production was sponsored and included corporate, foundation and individual support.

Since we announced our intentions in 2017 to build the Mainstage Theatre Complex, many have loyally supported the effort to make it a reality. Now we can celebrate the collective impact this community of supporters has made. We exceeded our campaign goal of \$49.9 million by \$1,430,274. We look back at our efforts with great pride and look forward to a bright future that will last for decades to come.

Thanks to the Board of Directors, donors, corporations and foundations who have supported the Playhouse in this effort. Because of you, this magnificent theatre is standing tall as an artistic beacon in Cincinnati and among national theatres. The Playhouse has always produced stellar work, but with the enhanced creative potential that our new home has to offer, we look forward to the art and the magic our new Playhouse will bring to us and the community.

It has truly been a joy to see this new theatre become a reality. Hope to see you soon at your new Playhouse!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Digi France Schueler". The signature is fluid and cursive.

**Digi France Schueler**  
Board President

# LETTER FROM OUR OSBORN FAMILY PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



As I reflect on this past season, I am humbled by the overwhelming support of our community. The opening of our new space marks the beginning of a new era at the Playhouse, and I am excited for all that's still to come.

In 2022-23, we rediscovered a classic with Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*; explored the concepts of individuality and self-expression with *Frida...A Self-Portrait*; and experienced the redemptive power of music with *The Lion*. These bold performances entertained audiences throughout Cincinnati and across the river and set the stage for our homecoming. In March, our fresh take on *A Chorus Line* opened the new facility and played to sold-out crowds for the length of its run. Next, we immersed ourselves in the unforgettable worlds of Afong Moy in *The Chinese Lady*, Floyd "Schoolboy" Barton in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, Margaret in *Origin Story*, and the eponymous *Shane*.

Storytelling is central to shaping our cultural narrative. At the Playhouse, we aim to inspire and entertain, and we also challenge ourselves to confront meaningful societal issues. In doing so, we acknowledge our human frailties and take a communal step toward acceptance. This is the transformative power of the arts.

Now, with the opening of our new facility, we have the opportunity to foster the next generation of artists and strengthen our community through creative exchange. The Playhouse is proud to launch our Arts and Culture Incubator which lends space and resources to 10 local organizations. I am eager to elevate the work of these Cincinnati artists and see their impact on our community.

To everyone who has paved the way for the success of the new Playhouse, thank you! I am sincerely grateful for your generosity, your patience and your trust throughout this process. Together, we will use our platform to promote a culture rooted in empathy and respect, position Cincinnati as a leader in the arts, and benefit our region for generations.

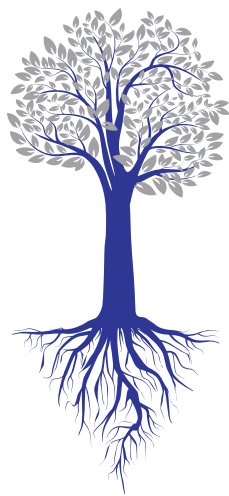
Welcome home!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Blake Robison".

**Blake Robison**  
Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director

# CONTINUED IMPACT – WHERE COMMUNITY MEETS CREATIVITY

Cincinnati is an artistically vibrant place to call home thanks to the millions of dollars raised and distributed annually by ArtsWave. As a proud partner, the Playhouse is guided by ArtsWave's Blueprint for Collective Action—a strategic plan designed to keep our region rich in creativity by highlighting the following focus areas:



## ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS

**8** professional shows on **5** stages entertained **67,029** audience members.

**530** audience members attended **17** post-show Artist Talk Backs.

Post-show discussions were held after every performance of *The Chinese Lady*.

**1,563** people experienced innovative Off the Grid programming.

## ARTS BRIDGE CULTURAL DIVIDES

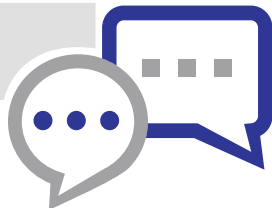
**7** mainstage shows featured the stories and experiences of BIPOC characters.

**4** of this season's productions were directed by women.

**2** of this season's **3** Resident Artists are BIPOC.

Our Arts & Culture Incubator partner, the United Native Collective, recorded **3** episodes of the *Life on the Margins: An Urban Native Experience* podcast at the Playhouse.

DuWaup's Cincinnati Poetry Slam, another Arts & Culture Incubator partner, hosted **6** events at the Playhouse, discussing various topics including the pitfalls of generational gatekeeping in the Black artspace and the need for a more unified Black art community.



## ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

**3** outreach tour productions reached **17,477** students and teachers.

**8** school districts across **4** counties experienced Playhouse classroom workshops.

**2,333** students at **4** Title I schools were immersed in a yearlong theatre residency.

## ARTS ENLIVEN NEIGHBORHOODS

**38** Off the Hill performances took place at **37** different community partner spaces, reaching **2,850** people.

**20,696** people attended our off-site mainstage productions at the Aronoff Center for the Arts in the Jarson-Kaplan Theater, The Carnegie, and the Warsaw Federal Incline Theater.

**\$51.2** million was raised, marking the successful completion of our capital campaign.



## ARTS PUT CINCINNATI ON THE MAP

**2** world premieres, *Shane* and *Origin Story*, were staged. *Shane* was co-produced with the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis and went on to rave reviews.

**3** new play commissions are in progress.



# NEW MAINSTAGE THEATRE COMPLEX

## THE MAINSTAGE THEATRE COMPLEX, FEATURING MOE AND JACK'S PLACE – THE ROUSE THEATRE, IS OFFICIALLY OPEN!

Beginning with a Ribbon Cutting the morning of March 13, we celebrated the completion of our capital campaign with community members, Playhouse staff and board, press, and local government officials. Speeches were given by Senator Catherine Ingram, who highlighted the economic benefits of our construction on the Mount Adams community, and Mayor Aftab Pureval, who cited the new Playhouse as a catalyst for an arts and cultural renaissance in our neighborhood.



Photo by Tony Arrasmith/Arrasmith & Associates.

That evening, the Playhouse reopened in style with a gala to thank our major donors. Cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and a light supper were served. The program featured a performance by Broadway legend and original *A Chorus Line* star Donna McKechnie, as well as a video sharing insights and heartfelt sentiments from lead donors and longtime Playhouse supporters Moe and Jack Rouse, Richard and Jennie Rosenthal, and Digi and Mike Schueler.

Thursday, March 16, was the opening night of *A Chorus Line*, the first production in our state-of-the-art Rouse Theatre. The sold-out performance was preceded by a reception for board members and production sponsors and followed by a cast party with festivities that included music and dancing, drinks and a catered buffet.

Our Toasts and Tours event, which took place on April 3, further honored our capital campaign donors. After a cocktail hour with passed hors d'oeuvres, attendees had the opportunity to tour the entirety of our new facility, gaining insider access to artists' spaces and behind-the-scenes looks at how the Playhouse operates.

The Grand Opening events culminated in a Community Open House on May 13, where all campaign donors and community members were invited to tour our new complex. Attractions included the dedication of our new Walk of Fame, food and beverage trucks, performances by our Arts & Culture Incubator partners and raffles for free tickets and other prizes.

### MAJOR CAPITAL CAMPAIGN SUPPORT PROVIDED BY:

**MOE AND  
JACK ROUSE**

**THE ROSENTHAL  
FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**



**THE ROBERT AND  
ADELE SCHIFF FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**

**DIGI AND MIKE  
SCHUELER**

**THE TAFT  
FAMILY**

Carol Ann and  
Ralph V. Haile, Jr.  
**FOUNDATION**

**THE LEMMERMAN  
FAMILY**



**MARGARET AND  
ALBERT VONTZ III**

**LKC  
FOUNDATION**

**CITY OF  
CINCINNATI**

**FIRST  
financial  
foundation**

**THE HAROLD C.  
SCHOTT FOUNDATION**

**BARBARA  
M. WEYAND**

**SUSAN  
FRIEDLANDER**

**CRAIG AND  
ANNE MAIER**

**ROBERT AND  
DELL ANNE  
SATHE**

**ELLEN AND RAY  
VAN DER HORST**



**Western & Southern  
Financial Fund**

**SUSAN AND DON  
ZAUNBRECHER**

**FIFTH THIRD  
FOUNDATION**





Jack Rouse, Managing Director Abby Marcus, Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director Blake Robison, Moe Rouse and Board Chair Ellen van der Horst at the ribbon cutting with staff and Board members.



Mayor Aftab Pureval with Blake Robison at the ribbon cutting with other city and state officials.



Moe and Jack Rouse at the major donor gala.



Actor Pam Myers at the Walk of Fame dedication.



Senator Catherine Ingram at the ribbon cutting.



Kitty, Richard and Jennie Rosenthal with Board President Digi Schueler.



Blake Robison welcomes the audience to opening night.



Blake Robison shows the donor wall to a guest at the Toast and Tours event.



Arts & Culture Incubator partners at the community open house.



The cast and creative team of *A Chorus Line* at the opening night cast party.

# OFF-SITE PRODUCTIONS

As construction of our mainstage theatre complex neared completion in the fall, we were thrilled to perform three plays off-site. Thanks to our friends at the Aronoff Center for the Arts, The Carnegie and the Warsaw Federal Incline Theater, our productions of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Frida...A Self-Portrait* and *The Lion* were a rousing success!

Agatha Christie wrote *Murder on the Orient Express* in 1934, and the story, anchored by beloved detective Hercule Poirot, continued to wow and surprise us. Under Risa Brainin's careful direction of Ken Ludwig's script, this show was ambitious in design, fast-paced in performance, and true to its masterful source material.



Katie Bradley, Andrew May and Taha Mandviwala in Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*.



The cast of Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*.

*Frida...A Self Portrait* is a one-woman show that pays homage to the iconic Mexican painter Frida Kahlo, who was as bold in her brushstrokes as she was in life. Directed by our own Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz, this production was written and performed by Vanessa Severo, whose powerful connections with the artist made for a stunning and truly memorable production.



Vanessa Severo in *Frida...A Self Portrait*.



Our co-production of *The Lion* with Arizona Theatre Company first came together at Southwark Playhouse in London last spring and summer. A solo musical performed by Max Alexander-Taylor, it tells an emotionally stirring tale about love, loss, and family through original, modern folk music.



Max Alexander-Taylor in *The Lion*.





The Singular Sensations present

# A CHORUS LINE

*A Chorus Line* bursts with artistic energy as a love letter to theatre itself. As the first show staged in Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre, this Tony Award®- and Pulitzer Prize-winning show ushered our community into a new theatrical era.

*A Chorus Line* follows 17 dancers who are competing for a role on Broadway. Through heartfelt monologues and musical numbers, they reveal their remarkable journeys to the stage. Our fresh take on the musical was directed by our own Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director Blake Robison and featured new choreography by Alex Sanchez. *A Chorus Line* reflects an authentic love for the art form that feels timeless — that's part of what makes it so beloved, no matter the generation of the audience.



Drew Lachey and Shiloh Goodin in *A Chorus Line*.



The cast of *A Chorus Line*.



## THANK YOU TO THE SINGULAR SENSATIONS!

With a cast of 26 performers and a 12-person orchestra, *A Chorus Line* is one of the most ambitious musicals the Playhouse has ever produced! Members of The Singular Sensations made this massive undertaking possible by collectively sponsoring the production's unique expenses. Their support made our grand opening a dazzling reality. Thank you to the individuals below for their generosity!

MS. KARLEE L. HILLIARD

TERRY LEMMERMAN

THE MARKLEY FAMILY

JACK AND MARILYN OSBORN

DIGI AND MIKE SCHUELER

BETSY AND JERRY SHROAT

MARTY C. TOMB

ELLEN AND RAY VAN DER HORST

BARBARA M. WEYAND

Photos on page 8 and 9 by Mikki Schaffner.

# BACK ON THE HILL

## THE CHINESE LADY

Written by Lloyd Suh, *The Chinese Lady* defied the limits of time and traditional storytelling to introduce Afong Moy, thought to be the first Chinese woman to step foot on American soil in 1834. Based on a true story, she's put on public display and taken on tour across the country as a living exhibit. Under Jess McLeod's direction, *The Chinese Lady* poetically accomplished what many artists seek to do: reveal new ways to view our world and ourselves.

To strengthen our connections with the Asian, Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, special programming accompanied our production of *The Chinese Lady*. A community action table featured facts about racism and the AAPI experience, organizations to support in the Cincinnati area, book recommendations, and ways to celebrate AAPI culture. Each performance was followed by a discussion, facilitated by our artistic staff and partners at the YWCA, which was aimed at channeling the emotions felt at the end of the play into active allyship.

In addition to these discussions, we provided an Affinity Space for members of the AAPI community to process the show. The space included snacks and beverages as well as opportunities to interact with activists from the local Chinese American community. Our goal was to enable productive conversation surrounding the issues of cultural exoticization, fetishization, dehumanization, tokenism and racism as presented in the play while creating a safe and comfortable environment for AAPI attendees.

We also hosted pre-show entertainment by musicians from the China-U.S. Cultural Exchange Academy featuring traditional Chinese music played on the Guzheng. Total creative control was given to the artists to ensure a true celebration of Chinese culture.



Sami Ma in *The Chinese Lady*.



Books by Asian American authors displayed on the community action table.

## AUGUST WILSON'S SEVEN GUITARS

With August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*, we journeyed back to 1948 and transformed the Rouse Theatre stage into Pittsburgh's Hill District. Directed by Ron OJ Parson, an expert on Wilson, this production beautifully illustrated the many facets of the Black American experience. Wilson's signature monologues, together with the performance of live blues on stage, made for a remarkable theatrical event.



Kierra Bunch and Dimonte Henning in August Wilson's *Seven Guitars*. Photo by Michael Brosilow.



# TWO WORLD PREMIERES

*Shane*, by Karen Zacarías, and *Origin Story*, by Nathan Alan Davis, were world premieres from beloved voices in American theatre. These stories are bold and entertaining in their own remarkable ways, and we're so proud to have been the first to produce them. We look forward to seeing them performed on stages across the country.

With *Shane*, Zacarías brought one of the most celebrated Westerns to life in the Rouse Theatre. Paying homage to the Western genre as we know it, *Shane* simultaneously gives it new life by pulling from rich historical details and including Black, Brown and Indigenous perspectives. A fascinating character study lies at the story's center, enriched by themes of family and principles and deepened by an examination of American masculinity. A co-production with the Guthrie Theater, director Blake Robison moved *Shane* to Minneapolis for a six-week run, where it was met with rave reviews.

Across the lobby in our Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre, playwright Davis and director Joanie Schultz told a modern-day story about identity and belonging. *Origin Story* introduced Margaret, a young woman with many existential questions on her mind — the kind that emerge when we're yearning to understand who we are. She led an ensemble of memorable and endearing characters, all searching for purpose in their own ways. With its profound and unexpected twists and turns, this script has stayed with us long after curtain call.



William DeMeritt and Ricardo Chavira in *Shane*.



Dwandra Nickole Lampkin, Amira Danan and Michael Lepore in *Origin Story*.



The cast of *Shane*.



Shonita Joshi and Amira Danan in *Origin Story*.



# 2022-23 EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

We believe that the arts are essential to the basic education of all students. Numerous studies have highlighted the correlation between school arts programs and student achievement, cognitive development and academic outcomes. The goal of our education programs is to provide quality, professional theatre experiences for children across the Tristate, supplementing — and, in many cases, replacing — their vanishing school arts programs. We strive to create experiences that are equitable and accessible for all children, regardless of their language barriers, socioeconomic status or abilities.

- **School Outreach Tour and Off the Hill** performances give students and families the opportunity to experience the magic of live theatre together.
- **Classroom workshops** bring professional teaching artists into schools to supplement curriculum studies and increase arts exposure.
- **Playhouse Education Partnership (PEP)** ensures that students at local Title I schools can engage meaningfully with the arts all year long.
- **Summer camps** support children's social, creative and academic development in a fun, skills-based environment.



## 37,980

Total number of students who participated in all education activities this season.

## SUMMER CAMP

After a year off-site due to construction, summer camps returned to the Playhouse in the summer of 2023 with the grand opening of our brand-new Mainstage Theatre Complex! Camps also continued to be offered at the Mason Community Center. Children ages 6 to 17 attended full-day camps in our iconic Eden Park/Mt. Adams location and in Mason, with a total participation of 589 students.



2023 Summer Theatre Camp.

## LAUNCH PAD

We continued our commitment to increasing accessibility with Launch Pad — a program designed to fully integrate students with sensory and developmental disabilities into a traditional theatre camp. Using their specialized knowledge in both arts education and special education, Launch Pad Coordinators helped train other Summer Camp staff about accommodating and interacting with students with disabilities and worked closely with families to assess each child's needs and ensure a supportive environment. This year, **135** of our campers participated in the program.

## SCHOOL OUTREACH TOUR AND OFF THE HILL

The Playhouse produces theatrical adaptations of classic children's literature every year. A diverse group of interns performed in schools during the week and at community centers throughout the region on weekends.

### OUTREACH TOUR

- **70** performances for **58** schools were held.
- The estimated total attendance for the School Outreach Tour season was **17,477**.
- We offered full or partial subsidies to **32** of the **58** schools visited.
- **55** percent of students came from racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds.

### OFF THE HILL

- **38** performances were held at **37** community partners throughout the region.
- The total attendance for the Off the Hill Tour season was **2,850**.



#### **THE LITTLE PRINCE**

By Rick Cummins and John Scoullar  
Adapted from the book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry



#### **STELLALUNA**

By Saskia Janse  
Adapted from the book by Janell Cannon



#### **NATE THE GREAT: THE MUSICAL**

Music & Lyrics: Brett Ryback  
Book & Lyrics: John MacLay

## THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

### ROBERT AND ADELE SCHIFF FAMILY FOUNDATION



JOHN A. SCHROTH  
FAMILY CHARITABLE  
TRUST



MAXWELL C. WEAVER  
FOUNDATION

ANONYMOUS

JERRY AND BETSY SHROAT

RON BUNT AND WEI SUN

## EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

### CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS

Workshops use drama education techniques to integrate core curriculum topics, such as social studies and literature, with the arts, infusing creativity and fun into the learning process.

- **8** school districts across **4** counties were reached through classroom workshops.
- **698** workshops took place.



### PRAISE FROM TEACHERS

- “Having a group from the Playhouse join our class allowed the students to connect and engage more.”
- “Loved this program and my students were highly engaged and making text-to-life connections that made for a deeper learning experience.”
- “Loved the multi-sensory learning opportunities and the relationship building exercises.”
- “The movement and classroom management was exceptional! Helpful for our wiggly learners.”
- “We love this program! Thank you for all your hard work in making it so engaging and interactive.”



Photos from classroom workshops.

### PEP

The Playhouse Education Partnership (PEP) is a free yearlong theatre program that immerses students at local Title I public schools in arts activities. We customize unique residencies for each classroom depending on their students' needs, developing 21st-century skills and teaching key academic subjects in conjunction with statewide curricular goals. This season, PEP schools received access to all three Outreach Tour productions as well as classroom workshops.

**PEP Schools:** Academy for Multilingual Immersion Studies, Midway Elementary, Roberts Academy and Silverton Academy.

- **2,333** students participated in programming.
- **320** workshops took place.
- Playhouse teaching artists spent a total of **130** days with students.

A recent PEP highlight has been our work with Midway Elementary. In addition to serving their special education classes at all grade levels schoolwide, we have also been working closely with their Autism Unit. This is a self-contained classroom serving nine high-need students in grades 2-4. By using tactile props and incorporating students' special interests into the lessons, we broadened their imaginations and increased their knowledge of social studies by engaging them in choose-your-own-adventure style activities, exploring different locations and historical periods along the way. A teacher from the Autism Unit shared that “students with autism can be literal. [The Playhouse] was great with helping them explore pretend.” To Midway's other classrooms, we provided lessons in music, public speaking, character creation and literature. Another teacher described Playhouse activities as “fun and educational for our children” and said that “we, students, teachers and staff here at Midway School highly valued the programs.”



# OFF THE GRID AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our series of immersive Off the Grid events integrates theatrical storytelling into social settings. In partnership with local businesses and organizations, the Playhouse performed two site-specific productions this season. A total of **1,563** audience members participated.

## CHILDREN OF THE CORN MAZE: IN SEARCH OF THE GREENVILLE GHOST

**LOCATION:** Burger Farm and Garden Center in Newtown, OH

**STORY:** In this follow-up to 2020's *Children of the Corn Maze*, guests investigated the disappearance of local teenagers at the hands of the Greenville Ghost, and enjoyed exploring the farm's spooky fields, drinking hot beverages, and trading tales around the bonfire.

**ATTENDANCE:** **702** participants at **8** performances



Photo from *Children of the Corn Maze: In Search of the Greenville Ghost*.

## MR. & MRS. FEZZIWIG'S HOLIDAY PARTY

**LOCATION:** The Phoenix in Cincinnati, OH

**STORY:** Guests celebrated the holidays in Dickensian style during these interactive parties which featured performances by carolers and actors, a variety of Victorian-era parlor games and dances, festive bites and beverages, and activities for kids.

**ATTENDANCE:** **861** participants at **6** performances



Photo from *Mr. & Mrs. Fezziwig's Holiday Party*.

## ARTS & CULTURE INCUBATOR

The Playhouse is excited about the launch of our new Arts and Culture Incubator this season. With the opening of our new state-of-the-art theatre facility, we now provide a home to seven local arts and culture groups and three resident artists to help elevate their work. Members of the Arts and Culture Incubator have access to Playhouse spaces at no cost for classes, rehearsals, creative work, networking, collaboration with their peers, and public and private events. The Playhouse also provides professional development services crafted to meet each of their unique needs.

### RESIDENT ARTISTS:



Curtis D. Shepard



Derek J. Snow

### RESIDENT ARTIST:

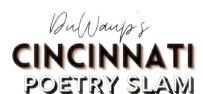
**QUEEN CITY FLASH**

### INCUBATOR PARTNERS:

Cincinnati Music Accelerator, Cincinnati Pride, DuWaup's Cincinnati Poetry Slam, Elevated Aerials, Heroes Rise Street Dance Academy, Urban Native Collective, Young Professionals Choral Collective of Cincinnati



ELEVATED AERIALS



Urban Native Collective



# THE LEADING LADIES CELEBRATE 10 YEARS



Members of the 10th Anniversary Committee.

What do **394** women, **8** plays, **39** events and a bathroom have in common? They are the heart of the Playhouse's Leading Ladies program. Established in 2013 as a way to foster a love of the Playhouse among theatre-loving women, the Leading Ladies have raised more than \$930,000 over the last decade and collectively sponsored eight Playhouse productions, from *Pride and Prejudice* to *Steel Magnolias*. Along the way they've enjoyed enlightening programs on planning a season, professional auditions, costuming, hand props, stage combat and more – all while enjoying good food, signature cocktails and time spent together.



For the 2022-23 season, rather than sponsoring a production, the Leading Ladies named a new women's restroom on the second floor of the Playhouse, near the Barbara M. Weyand Donor Lounge. With the establishment of the Leading Ladies Loo, the Ladies have become a permanent – and useful! – part of our new mainstage theatre complex.

Management and planning of each year's activities is accomplished through the dedication of two program Co-Chairs and an active, involved Steering Committee. Together, they determine the programs, and design and execute four signature events each season. This year's Co-Chairs, Debbie White Richardson and Marty Humes, took the Ladies offsite to The Carnegie and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music for events while our Mount Adams facility was closed for construction, and welcomed the Ladies into the new Playhouse with two events in our new home.

In May, the Ladies held the fourth and final event of the season, the 10th Anniversary Celebration. Event Chair Linda Holthaus and an energetic and enthusiastic 10th Anniversary Committee planned a very special celebration of 10 years of amazing theatre and the women who made it all possible. We welcomed 170 women to this elegant, once-in-a-decade event, which commemorated the past and looked forward to the future of the program.

Event photos by Mikki Schaffner.



# DEIA COMMITMENT

We welcome people of all races, ethnicities, religions, sexualities, gender identities, ages, abilities, backgrounds, countries of origin and other non-majority communities. This commitment is reflected in our programming, audience, outreach and all connected with the Playhouse — management, staff, Board of Trustees, volunteers and vendors.

As a part of our ongoing commitment, the Playhouse launched two new programs last season:

## PLAYHOUSE EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS

These staff-led groups provide an opportunity to build community, have meaningful discussions, and share resources to foster a diverse, inclusive workplace. In 2022, the Playhouse launched three Employee Resource Groups: the Kaleidoscope Collective for BIPOC staff, the LGBTQ+ ERG, and an Ally ERG for members of non-marginalized groups to learn how to become active allies.

## PLAYHOUSE PRIDE EVENT SERIES

The Playhouse PRIDE Event Series welcomed nearly 200 individuals during the four events this season:

- A Cincinnati Welcome with Max Alexander-Taylor, star of *The Lion*, hosted at the home of Jim Conway and Rick Robertson.
- A PRIDE Family Outing with an Off the Hill performance of *Nate the Great: The Musical*.
- Our Playhouse PRIDE Housewarming, featuring tours of our new facility and performances by our Arts and Culture Incubator partners.
- And the PRIDE Signature Event – a pre-show Happy Hour before *Origin Story*.



Max Alexander-Taylor, Julia Wesselkamper, Jim Conway and Sean Daniels, director of *The Lion*, at the Welcome event.



A PRIDE Family Outing included cookies, bracelets and an Off the Hill performance of *Nate the Great: The Musical*.



# MAKING CONNECTIONS

This season, the Playhouse continued to strengthen its connections both within our local community and with nationally acclaimed talent. We are proud to bring diverse, engaging works of great artistry to Cincinnati and to put our artistic excellence in the national spotlight.

## HEATHER GILBERT

A Chicago-based lighting designer, Heather Gilbert brought her expertise to our world premiere production of *Origin Story* this season. Her work includes the recent Broadway production of *Parade*, for which she was nominated for both a Tony Award® and the Drama Desk Award. For her recent design of *The Sound Inside*, Heather won the Drama Desk Award, was an honoree for the Outer Critics Circle, and was nominated for another Tony Award®.



Photo of Joanie Schultz (left) and Heather Gilbert (right) by Mikki Schaffner.



Screenshot of the American Theatre article.

## SHANE AT THE GUTHRIE THEATER

A co-production and co-commission with the renowned Guthrie Theater, *Shane* moved to Minneapolis, where it received rave reviews, after a successful run here at the Playhouse. The *Twin Cities Pioneer Press* called it “a richly entertaining piece of theater that taps into all the best elements of a Western and applies a corrective to much of what Hollywood consistently got wrong about American history.” Our partnership was featured in *American Theatre*, the national industry magazine for theatre.

## NATHAN ALAN DAVIS

Nathan Alan Davis is one of the nation’s hottest contemporary playwrights. In 2018, Davis was named one of the “Black Male Writers for Our Time” by *The New York Times Style Magazine*. In 2023 alone, he had world premieres of three plays debuting across the country: *Eternal Life Part 1* in Philadelphia, *The High Ground* in Washington, D.C. and, of course, *Origin Story* here in Cincinnati. We are excited to announce that Davis is also working on a new commission for the Playhouse.



Photo of Nathan Alan Davis.

## PLAYHOUSE ALUMNI ON BROADWAY

Shiloh Goodin, who played Cassie in our production of *A Chorus Line*, returned to Broadway this year as a puppeteer in *Life of Pi* on Broadway. She played one of the principal roles, Richard Parker the tiger.

Taha Mandiwala, who has appeared in our productions of *Murder on the Orient Express*, *Shakespeare in Love* and *A Christmas Carol*, made his Broadway debut in *Life of Pi*.

Betsy Rosen, who acted as a puppetry consultant on our productions of *Rooted*, *Peter and the Starcatcher* and *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, also made her Broadway debut in *Life of Pi*. Betsy and Taha were both members of the Playhouse’s Bruce E. Coyle Acting Intern program.



Vanessa Severo in *Frida...A Self-Portrait*. Photo by Mikki Schaffner.

## FRIDA...A SELF-PORTRAIT

After a successful run here in Cincinnati, *Frida...A Self-Portrait* has gone on to be produced across the country. Written and performed by Vanessa Severo and directed by our Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz, the play recently finished a run at The O'Reilly Theater in Pittsburgh and will be produced at The Geva Theater in Rochester and Indiana Repertory Theatre in Indianapolis.

## A CROWN JEWEL

Amongst the myriad of publicity the new Playhouse received last spring was a front-page feature in the *Cincinnati Business Courier* that described how the Playhouse's brand-new facility is helping to spark a renaissance and turn Mt. Adams and Walnut Hills into an arts and cultural destination. The article named the Playhouse "the crown of an emerging arts district," writing that "neighborhoods from Mount Adams to an 'arts corridor' sprouting up along Gilbert Avenue already show signs of revitalization."



Cover of the March 10-16 issue of *Cincinnati Business Courier*.

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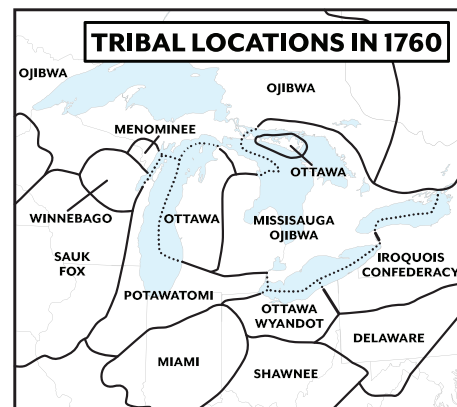
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As a step toward honoring the truth and achieving healing and reconciliation with those Indigenous peoples who were affected most by the Doctrine of Discovery\* and broken treaties, we acknowledge the traditional Shawnee and Myaamia (Miami) lands on which we now stand, and on which the city of Cincinnati was built.

\*The Doctrine of Discovery is a principle of international law dating back to the late 15th century that specifically sanctioned and promoted the conquest, colonization and exploitation of non-Christian territories and peoples. Hundreds of years of decisions and laws continuing right up to our own time can ultimately be traced back to the Doctrine of Discovery — laws that invalidate or ignore the rights, sovereignty and humanity of Indigenous peoples in the United States and around the world.





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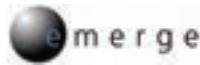
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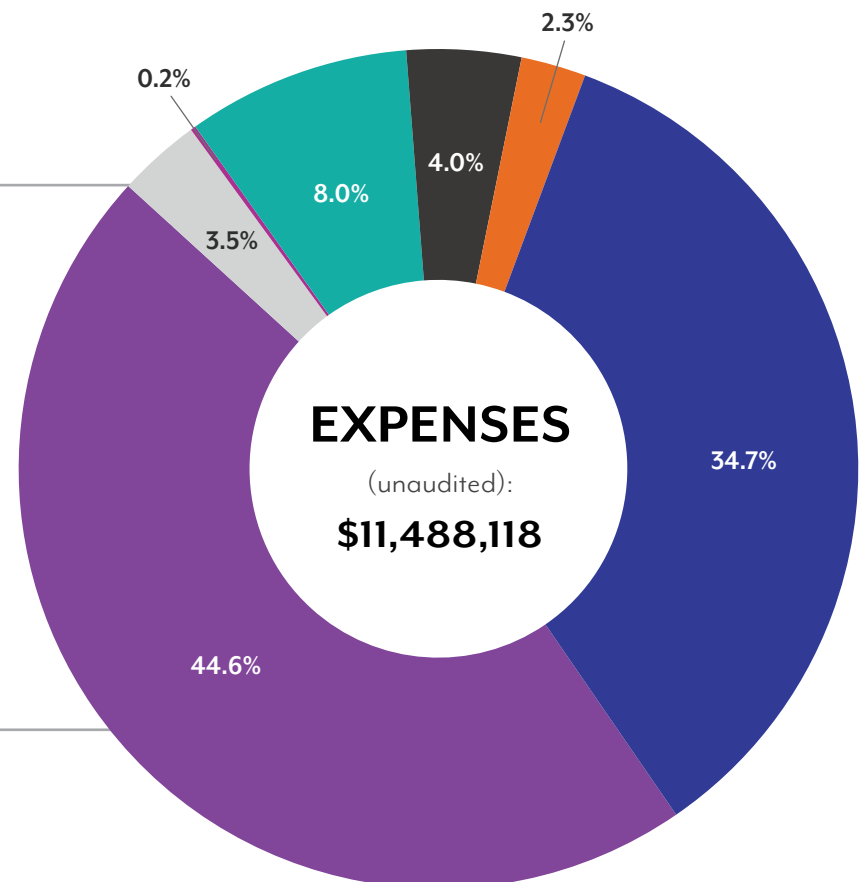
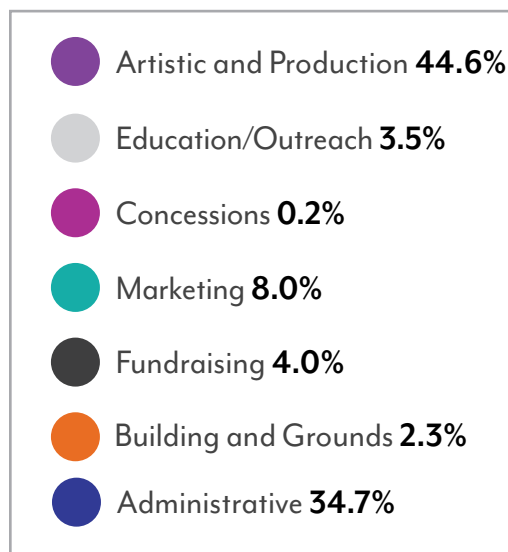
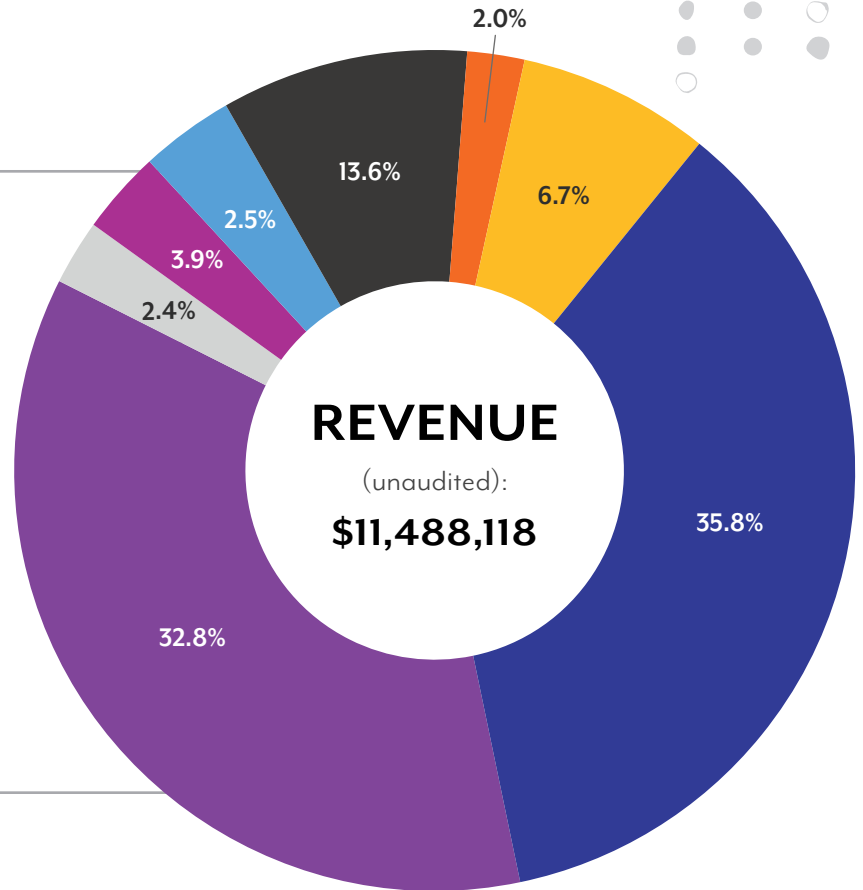
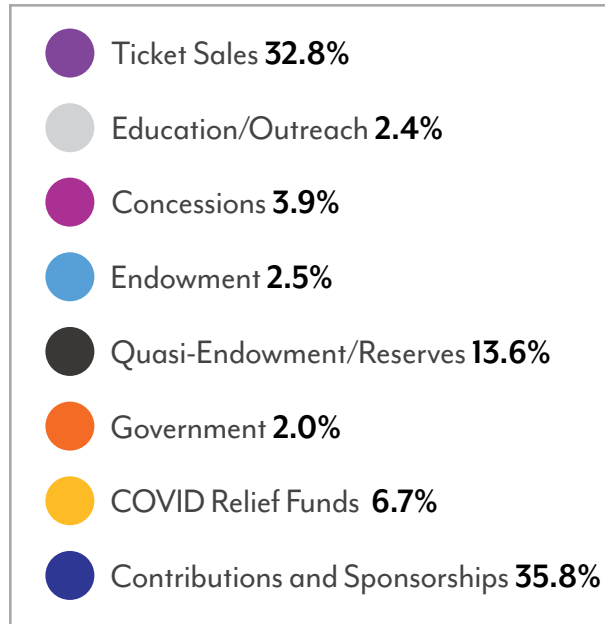
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2022-23 Season



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Front cover: Vanessa Severo in *Frida...A Self Portrait*, Alexa Racioppi with Matthew Ranaudo in *A Chorus Line* and William DeMeritt in *Shane*.  
Photos by Mikki Schaffner.