

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



CINCINNATI'S **NATIONAL THEATRE**





OUR MISSION

We are Cincinnati's national theatre — committed to bringing diverse, engaging works of great artistry to our community and to putting Cincinnati's artistic excellence in the national spotlight.

OUR VALUES

Inclusion On Stage and Off – We tell everyone's stories on stage and value everyone's contribution to the process of making them.

Be Curious – Dream, try, fail, try again, learn, grow.

Keep the “Play” in Playhouse – A joyful sense of adventure creates the best experience for all.

Collaboration is Key – Our art relies on everyone's participation.

Excellence Matters – We seek the best in ourselves, assume the best in others and strive for excellence in our work together.

HOW WE DO IT

We produce theatrical works of exceptional artistry.

We provide a home for national and local artists and area arts groups.

We facilitate lifelong theatrical discovery and learning.

We respect and uplift each other – our staff, artists and audience.

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT



On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your generous and continued support of the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. Your commitment enables us to bring transformative theatre experiences to our community.

As we wrap up the 2024-25 Season at the Playhouse, there is much to celebrate and be excited about. This season has been extraordinary — our audiences laughed, cheered, and were deeply moved by the remarkable performances on our stages. Highlights included our first pre-Broadway production, *Rutka*; two Pulitzer Prize-winning plays, *Primary Trust* and *English*; beloved classics like *A Christmas Carol* and *The Book Club Play*; and contemporary gems such as *Birthday Candles*, which quickly became an audience favorite. This past season has truly showcased what it means to be Cincinnati's national theatre.

Additionally, we served our community through our Education and Outreach programs, the Arts and Culture Incubator, and the audience engagement activities we conducted throughout the year. Below are just some of our accomplishments in numbers:

- Played to **91,000** audience members at mainstage productions.
- Reached **36,000** students through our education programs across **100** schools.
- Presented **43** Off the Hill performances for **2,900** people at **42** community partner locations
- Staged **306** performances of nine mainstage productions, including **5** student matinees.
- Hosted **52** community events in our Arts and Culture Incubator, supporting **8** emerging arts organizations and theatre artists.

Thanks to your generosity, the Playhouse continues to thrive artistically and financially. Your support ensures that we can continue to inspire, educate, and entertain for years to come.

As we look ahead to the 2025-26 Season, we remain committed to delivering the artistry and storytelling you cherish. I am honored to serve my second year as President of the Playhouse Board and look forward to all of the great things we will accomplish together.

Thank you for being an essential part of your Playhouse in the Park.

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Leonard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name and last name clearly legible.

Jamie Leonard
President of the Board

LETTER FROM OUR OSBORN FAMILY PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



It's a challenging time for the arts. Every newspaper and website has a story about our peer theatres struggling to attract audiences, navigating a new philanthropic landscape, and even running emergency "save the theatre" campaigns.

Amidst the tumult, Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park remains an outlier. Our stability and success are the envy of our peers nationwide. Thank you for helping to make it possible!

People keep asking me how we did it. Here's what I tell them:

Our **AUDIENCES** are loyal. That's the Cincinnati way. We have maintained our base with over 9,000 subscribers for several years. Ours is a beloved institution, and we honor the many people who have made the Playhouse what it is today, even as we welcome new faces to the theatre every season.

Our **FACILITY** is first-class. We had the good fortune to christen our new building coming out of the pandemic, and the entire city showed up to celebrate with us. Everything about the Playhouse tells you that you're in for a special night, a quality experience, and a memorable encounter.

Our **STAFF** is best-in-show. I've worked at theatres across the country, and I'll put our skilled, experienced artisans, production crew, and arts administrators up against anyone. They make dreams come alive on stage, and they are devoted members of our Greater Cincinnati community.

Our **DONORS** remain generous. The breadth of our programming and the high quality we display on stage are only made possible by a large group of individuals, foundations, corporations, and ArtsWave. You understand what it takes, and you want the best for Cincinnati. Thank you for your continued support.

This Annual Report includes highlights from the 2024-25 Season in all areas of our operations. Most likely, you'll find something in here you didn't know about. So, flip the page, enjoy the celebration, and take a victory lap with the Playhouse. You earned it!

Cheers,

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:



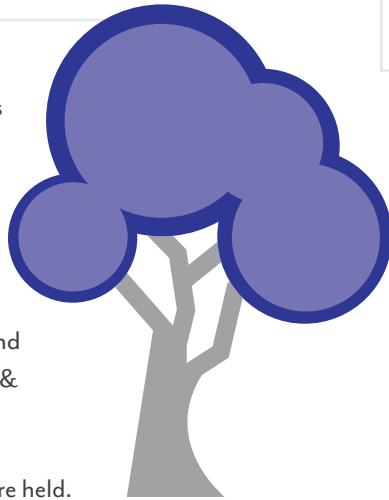
ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS

9 professional productions on **2** stages entertained **91,750** audience members across **306** performances.

2,909 audience members attended **31** post-show Art Talks.

4 local arts & culture organizations and **4** theatre artists were part of our Arts & Culture Incubator.

52 Arts & Culture Incubator events were held.



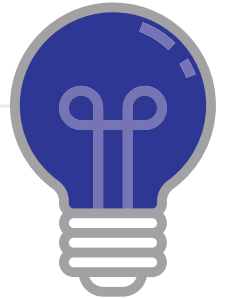
ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

2 Outreach Touring productions reached **24,263** students.

100 schools across **15** counties participated in Playhouse education programs.

107 School Outreach Tour shows and **83** post-show discussions.

1,448 students at **3** Title I schools were immersed in a yearlong theatre residency.



ARTS ENLIVEN NEIGHBORHOODS

43 Off the Hill performances took place at **42** different community partner spaces, reaching **2,976** people.

59 zip codes in the Greater Cincinnati area gained valuable arts experiences.



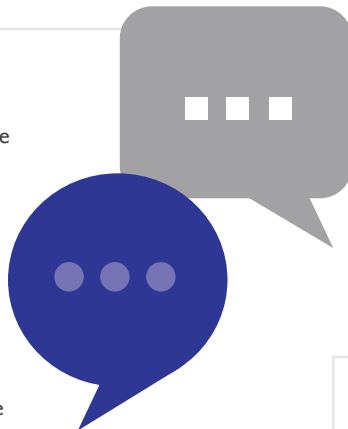
ARTS BRIDGE CULTURAL DIVIDES

3 mainstage shows featured the stories and experiences of BIPOC characters.

5 productions were written by women, and **5** by BIPOC playwrights.

6 of this season's directors were women, and **3** were BIPOC.

4 new play commissions are in progress, **2** of which are by BIPOC writers and **2** are by local Cincinnati artists.



ARTS PUT CINCINNATI ON THE MAP

2 co-productions with national LORT theatres in Houston, Texas, and in Princeton, New Jersey: *Dial M for Murder* and *Primary Trust*.

2 Pulitzer Prize-winning plays: *Primary Trust* and *English*.

1 pre-Broadway production: *Rutka: A New Musical*.



2024-25 MOE AND JACK'S PLACE — THE ROUSE THEATRE SEASON

2024-25 ROSENTHAL SHELTERHOUSE THEATRE SEASON

The 2024-25 season presented by **SCHUELER GROUP** and **THE VONTZ FAMILY**
Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre Season Design Sponsor: **KERRY AUTOMOTIVE**



DIAL M FOR MURDER

By FREDERICK KNOTT
Adapted by JEFFREY HATCHER

AUG. 17 – SEP. 15, 2024

Sponsored by U.S. BANK



MR. PARENT

By MELINDA LOPEZ
with MAURICE EMMANUEL PARENT
Conceived with MEGAN SANDBERG-ZAKIAN

SEPT. 7 – OCT. 6, 2024

Sponsored by DIGI AND MIKE SCHUELER



MC & TOM BRENNAN,
LINDA & GARY GREENBERG and
THE LEMMERMAN FAMILY present

RUTKA: A NEW MUSICAL

Based on the diary of RUTKA LASKIER, as published in
Rutka's Notebook: A Voice from the Holocaust
Music and Lyrics by JOCELYN MACKENZIE
and JEREMY LLOYD-STYLES
Book by NEENA BEBER

OCT. 13 – NOV. 10, 2024

Sponsored by THE JEWISH FOUNDATION OF CINCINNATI



The Second City

65TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW

OCT. 24 – DEC. 29, 2024

Sponsored by SANDY AND DICK MANTEUFFEL



FIRST™ first financial bank presents

A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By CHARLES DICKENS
Adapted by BLAKE ROBISON

NOV. 22 – DEC. 29, 2024



ELLEN & RAY van der HORST present

ENGLISH

By SANAZ TOOSI

MARCH 1 – 30, 2025



MOE & JACK ROUSE and
RANDOLPH WADSWORTH present

PRIMARY TRUST

By EBONI BOOTH

FEB. 1 – 23, 2025



THE MARKLEY FAMILY presents

BIRTHDAY CANDLES

By NOAH HAIDLE

APRIL 19 – MAY 18, 2025

Sponsored by RON MATSON AND DANIEL YOUNG



LEADING *Ladies* presents

with Executive Producer  FIFTH THIRD

THE BOOK CLUB PLAY

By KAREN ZACARIAS

MARCH 22 – APRIL 20, 2025

Sponsored by JOHNSON INVESTMENT COUNSEL
and CLARK SCHAEFER HACKETT

Barry Mulholland and Brandon Hearnberger in *Dial M for Murder*; The cast of *Rutka: A New Musical*; Jefferson A. Russell and Andrew May in *A Christmas Carol*; Lilian Oben, Peter Bisgaier and DeShawn Harold Mitchell in *Primary Trust*; Matthew McGloin, Marina Shay and Eli Mayer in *The Book Club Play*; Maurice Emmanuel Parent in *Mr. Parent*; Ariana Asefriad in *English*; Mierka Girten, Will Allen, Amira Danan, Adam Poss and Barbara Chisholm in *Birthday Candles*. All production photos in the Annual Report by Mikki Schaffner.

DEEPLY ROOTED IN OUR COMMUNITY, RECOGNIZED ON A NATIONAL STAGE

The best of American theatre entertained and inspired our community and put Cincinnati in the national spotlight.

The incredible story of the 2024-25 season was built around one central, bold theme: We are Cincinnati's national theatre. This is more than a tagline; it's our mission, and it's a promise we delivered on this year. It was a season defined by our commitment to sharing diverse and compelling works with our community, and to shining a national spotlight on the incredible artistic talent right here in Cincinnati.

A POWERFUL WORLD PREMIERE

A highlight of the season was our production of the world premiere musical *Rutka*. Based on the diary of Rutka Laskier, which chronicles her experience living in a ghetto in Poland during the German occupation, this project marked a significant milestone for the Playhouse. It was our first pre-Broadway production — developed in collaboration with outside producers who supported and helped guide the creative process.

We were honored to welcome back director Wendy Goldberg, whose long-standing relationship with the Playhouse added depth to the production. The folk-pop/indie rock sound of the musical brought a contemporary edge to the story and allowed us to engage a younger generation of artists and audiences alike.



The cast of *Rutka: A New Musical*.

SEASON HIGHLIGHTS continued

We also built a meaningful partnership with the Nancy and David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center, whose ongoing interest in future collaborations reinforced the impact of this work. *Rutka* was a powerful example of our commitment to nurturing new voices and stories. It also laid the groundwork for future enhanced productions — an exciting and growing part of our artistic vision moving forward.

In addition to this main stage world premiere, the Playhouse reaffirmed its commitment to the development of new work in other ways. We hosted a series of readings featuring both local and national playwrights, offering them valuable time, space, and professional collaboration to develop their plays without the immediate pressure of production. These workshops prioritized the creative process, supporting writers at a formative stage of their work.



Play reading of *Mary's Monster* by Maggie Lou Rader.



Play reading of *Sliced* by Isaiah Reaves.

A PRIZE-WORTHY PAIR

Eboni Booth's *Primary Trust* exemplified the artistic ambition of this season. It kicked off our spring in Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre. As the first Pulitzer Prize-winning play of the season, it set an incredibly high standard. This story of Kenneth and his best friend, guided by the nuanced and thoughtful direction of fan favorite Timothy Douglas, was both beautiful and deeply poignant.

Primary Trust play marked our first co-production with the prestigious McCarter Theatre Center in Princeton, New Jersey. This partnership proved to be a resounding success, enabling this powerful story and our work to reach an entirely new audience.

The second Pulitzer Prize-winning play we produced was *English* by Sanaz Toossi. In *English*, we see the journey of four Iranian students in an English classroom, preparing to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language. Beyond being a beautifully crafted and intellectually resonant play, *English* offered us a unique and meaningful opportunity to connect with our local Persian community.

The production coincided with the celebration of Nowruz, the Persian New Year, and we were proud to honor this significant cultural moment by inviting community members to assemble a traditional Haft-Sin table in the lobby. Through this production, we were able to not only welcome members of the Persian community into our theatre, but also to elevate their voices, celebrate their traditions, and foster deeper cultural exchange.



DeShawn Harold Mitchell in *Primary Trust*.



Neagheen Homaifar, Aryana Asefriad, Sanam Laila Hashemi and Fady Demian in *English*.

A RICH BLEND

From a fresh adaptation of an iconic thriller to a charming contemporary play about the beauty of life, the rich blend of plays that book-ended our season entertained, inspired, and quickly became audience favorites.

We opened the Rouse Theatre season with Jeffrey Hatcher's adaptation of ***Dial M for Murder***. This fresh take on a well-known thriller introduced a bold twist — reimagining the central affair as a relationship between two women. It was a compelling and modern update to this familiar title. We partnered with local film historian Joe Horine, who hosted screenings of the classic Hitchcock film, offering audiences a deeper context. *Dial M for Murder* also marked a successful co-production with the Alley Theatre in Houston, Texas, further strengthening our artistic collaborations across the country.

The return of audience favorite ***The Book Club Play*** closed the Rouse season on a high note. This warm and witty literary comedy was directed by Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director Blake Robison, who originally staged it 12 years ago in the Rosenthal Shelterhouse. Blake's long-standing collaboration with playwright Karen Zacarías has produced memorable productions such as *Shane* and *Native Gardens*, and this revival was no exception.

The Rosenthal Shelterhouse season opened with ***Mr. Parent***, a one-person show performed by and based on the experiences of Maurice Parent. The play explored his time teaching in the Boston public school system and was made locally relevant through research into our own community's education landscape. We also partnered with Crayons2Computers to collect and distribute classroom supplies.

In the spring, the Rosenthal Shelterhouse season closed with ***Birthday Candles***, written by Noah Haidle and directed by Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz. This charming play was a touching meditation on the passage of time and the beauty of ordinary life. The onstage act of literally baking a cake added a delightful layer of theatricality to the production.

HOLIDAY FAVORITES

The holiday season is typically a time when we turn to familiar stories and shared traditions. We welcomed audiences with two beloved offerings that embodied the spirit of the season. ***The Second City 65th Anniversary Show*** celebrated decades of iconic comedy, featuring sketches from the legendary troupe's rich history. At the same time, we presented the second annual staging of our new adaptation of ***A Christmas Carol***. These sold-out holiday offerings not only brought in enthusiastic, often first-time, theatregoers but also fostered meaningful, multigenerational experiences — strengthening our role as a gathering place for the community during this special time of year.

Every production, partnership, and artistic risk this season served a greater purpose: advancing our mission to be both deeply rooted in our community and recognized on a national stage. Whether through bold new work, reimagined classics, or thoughtful collaborations that amplify underrepresented voices, we continue to define what it means to be Cincinnati's national theatre. This past season was a testament to the power of storytelling to entertain, to unite, to challenge, and to inspire.



Geena Quintos and Teresa Zimmermann in *Dial M for Murder*.



The cast of *The Book Club Play*.



Maurice Emmanuel Parent in *Mr. Parent*.



The cast of *Birthday Candles*.



The cast of *A Christmas Carol*.

EDUCATION PROGRAMMING FUELS CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

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 programs 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 offered students and families the opportunity to experience the magic of live theatre together.
- **Classroom workshops** brought professional teaching artists into schools to supplement curriculum studies and increase arts exposure.
- **Playhouse Education Partnership (PEP)** ensured that students at local Title I schools could engage meaningfully with the arts all year long.
- **Summer camps** fostered children's social, creative, and academic development in a fun, skills-based setting.

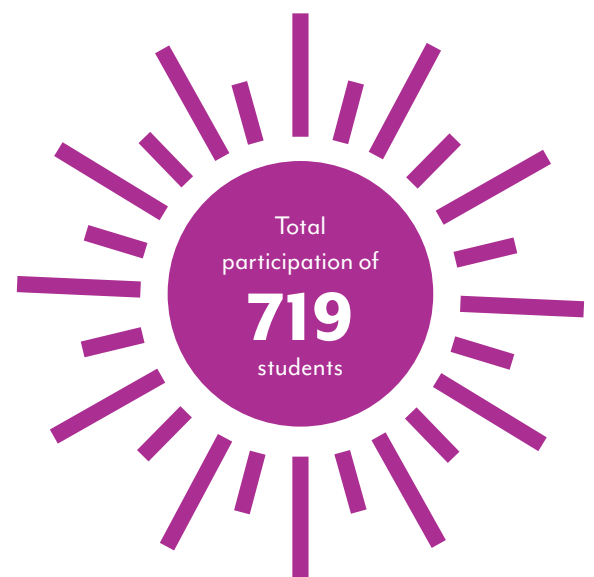


SUMMER CAMP

We believe theatre can be created by anyone at any age. Guided by our passionate staff, campers work together to make connections with audiences, each other, and themselves by learning performance techniques including musical theatre, stage combat, acting, rehearsal, and performance. In our inclusive artistic environment, campers explore their individuality, gain confidence, form new friendships, and tap into their creativity. This season, children aged 6 to 17 attended camps at the Playhouse, Mason Community Center, and Ignite Institute in Erlanger, KY, with a total participation of 719 campers.



2024 Summer Theatre Camp.



We were proud to provide **47** scholarships to students who would have otherwise been unable to participate.

LAUNCH PAD

We continued our commitment to increasing accessibility with Launch Pad — a program designed to fully integrate students with neurodivergences, sensory issues, and developmental disabilities into a traditional theatre camp environment. Using their specialized knowledge in both arts education and special education, Launch Pad Coordinators helped train other Summer Camp staff about accommodating students with disabilities and worked closely with families to assess each child's needs and ensure a supportive environment. This year, **51** of our campers participated in the program.

SCHOOL OUTREACH TOUR AND OFF THE HILL

This season, the Playhouse produced theatrical adaptations of **Tomás and the Library Lady** and **Alice in the Hundred Acre Wood**. A diverse group of professional actors performed in schools during the week and at community centers throughout the region on weekends.

OUTREACH TOUR

- **107** performances for **89** schools were held.
- The total attendance for the School Outreach Tour season was **24,263**.
- We offered full or partial subsidies to **69** of the **89** schools visited.
- **46%** of students came from racially/ethnically diverse backgrounds.

OFF THE HILL

- **43** performances were held at **42** community partners throughout the region.
- The total attendance for the Off the Hill Tour season was **2,976**.



TOMÁS AND THE LIBRARY LADY

Adapted by José Cruz González
Based on the book by Pat Mora



ALICE IN THE HUNDRED ACRE WOOD

WORLD PREMIERE FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES
By Maggie Lou Rader

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024-25 EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SPONSORS.

THE ROBERT AND ADELE SCHIFF FAMILY FOUNDATION



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FAMILY FOUNDATION

LOUISE TAFT SEMPLE
FOUNDATION



THE SUTPHIN FAMILY
FOUNDATION

CLASSROOM WORKSHOPS

Workshops use drama education techniques to integrate core curriculum topics, such as social studies and literature, with the arts. This season, we infused creativity and fun into the learning process with a total of **787** classroom workshops.

PRAISE FROM TEACHERS

"My kids loved it! They have grown so much over the past two months because of Playhouse!"

"Thank you so much! I always love seeing my students learn new skills and get out of their comfort zone."

"Thanks for bringing your knowledge and joy into our classroom."

"Thank you for bringing drama centered instruction to young students!"

"Thank you for your partnership! We love having Playhouse join our classroom!"

"We all had a great time! I will definitely use the ideas of dramatic interpretation in my everyday teaching."

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 intensive classroom workshops and both Outreach Tour productions.

PEP Schools: Academy for Multilingual Immersion Studies, Midway Elementary, Silverton Academy

1,448

students participated in programming.

360

workshops took place.

133

total number of days that teaching artists spent with students.



Photo from in-school programs.

ARTS AND CULTURE INCUBATOR

The Playhouse uplifts the work of theatre artists and cultural peers by providing resources and support for their creative efforts through our Arts and Culture Incubator. Launched in the spring of 2023, the program engages local and nationally recognized theatre-makers as well as cultural organizations from our community to help elevate their work.

The Arts and Culture Incubator serves several groups. Our Resident Artists are local theatre-makers, while the Incubator Partners are small, non-profit cultural organizations based in our community. Both have access to Playhouse spaces at no cost for classes, rehearsals, creative work, networking, collaboration, and public and private events and performances. Additionally, the Playhouse has commissioned playwrights who are produced nationally and who are based in Greater Cincinnati. Not only does a commission pay a playwright to write a new play, but it also allows for the readings, workshops, and script development necessary to prepare it for full production.

From staged readings to workshops, The Arts and Culture Incubator held a total of **52** events this season.

- A staged reading of ***The Blackface Project*** by Isaiah Reaves followed the true story of Bert Williams, the first Black man on Broadway.
- ***The Shining a Light Series - Casting Beyond the Binary***, one of a series of workshops by The Ghostlight Stage Company, discussed inclusion for trans and nonbinary performers in theatre and best practices for casting underrepresented queer identities.
- Hosted ***The REDress Project*** with The Urban Native Collective to raise awareness of missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- Queen City Flash staged a live podcast recording of ***Have Monster, Will Travel Live!***

Other Arts and Culture Incubator events included:

- ***One-Act Double Feature***, Staged Readings — The Ghostlight Theatre Company
- ***Mary's Monster***, Staged Reading — Maggie Lou Rader
- ***The Ravenside Occurrence***, Staged Reading — Derek Snow
- ***Life on The Margins***, Live Podcast Recording — Urban Native Collective
- ***Sliced: A New Play***, Staged Reading — Isaiah Reaves
- ***The Wonder***, Staged Reading — Maggie Lou Rader
- ***Get Off of Me***, Staged Reading — Curtis D. Shepard
- ***Cabaret on the Runway***, Fundraising Event — The Ghostlight Stage Company

Funding for the Arts and Culture Incubator provided by



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

Season Sponsor of New Work: **Mark & Nancy Dawes**

THEATRE-MAKERS



NATHAN ALAN DAVIS
Commissioned Playwright



QUEEN CITY FLASH
Resident Artist



MAGGIE LOU RADER
Resident Artist and
Commissioned Playwright



THERESA REBECK
Commissioned Playwright



ISAIAH REAVES
Resident Artist



CURTIS D. SHEPARD
Resident Artist



DEREK SNOW
Commissioned Playwright

INCUBATOR PARTNERS



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA) COMMITMENT

The Playhouse's DEIA plan is updated annually and approved by the full Board of Trustees. During the 2024-25 season, we focused on expanding and enhancing our accessibility programs. Among the strides made this season:

We offered our first public, sensory-friendly/relaxed performance of *A Christmas Carol*. A sensory friendly/relaxed performance is designed for individuals who would benefit from a more sensory-aware and even performance environment. Although open to all, these performances are offered to accommodate individuals with sensory sensitivities, anxiety, dementia, autism spectrum disorders, learning differences or challenges, and others who need a more accommodating environment. Some of the accommodations include soft lighting (no strobe lights/strong lights, house lights dimmed), reduced sound, a quiet space, and socially distanced seating. This inclusive experience featured trained staff specifically prepared to support patrons and offered tickets at reduced prices to ensure broader access.



Andrew May in *A Christmas Carol*. Photo by Mikki Schaffner.

Our long-standing audio-described program saw growth. We extended services to the Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre, allowing more patrons with vision impairments to engage fully with our productions. During an audio-described performance trained volunteers describe the visual elements of the production via a hearing enhancement system.

To build on these and the success of our other accessibility programs — including signed performances, a hearing enhancement system, and ample accessible seating — we've initiated a comprehensive accessibility audit and undertaken staff trainings around disability and accessibility awareness. The audit, set to be completed by 2026, will guide improvements to ensure our spaces and programs are welcoming and accessible to all.

UPLIFTING VOICES AND FOSTERING CONNECTION

The Playhouse is committed to creating a space where LGBTQIA+ individuals feel safe, seen, and celebrated. We believe in the transformative power of the arts — not only as a means of healing and self-expression, but also as a catalyst for empathy, understanding, and social change. Through storytelling and shared experience, we aim to foster a community where everyone can participate fully, safely, and authentically.

Our PRIDE Event Series is a vital expression of this mission, offering meaningful opportunities to uplift LGBTQIA+ voices and foster lasting connections. During the 2024–25 season, the Playhouse PRIDE Committee hosted a special pre- and post-show celebration around *Dial M for Murder* to honor and support LGBTQIA+ representation both on and off the stage.

Proceeds from the event helped support the character of Maxine Hadley in the production. Fifteen generous Hosts, 60 guests, and the cast of *Dial M for Murder* came together to enjoy the performance and take part in a vibrant celebration — highlighting the joy, talent, and community at the heart of our mission.



PRIDE Committee Chairs and Hosts.

LEADING Ladies

This year, Co-Chairs Catharina Toltzis and Ronna Willis welcomed 152 members for the 12th season of the Leading Ladies program. In addition to leading membership and recruitment, they helmed four fabulous events, all featuring the culinary delights of the official caterer for the 2024-25 Leading Ladies season, eat well celebrations and feasts.

- August 2024: The Ladies made a visit to eat well's Newport, KY, catering kitchen and learned the secrets of stage food from Rosenthal Shelterhouse Properties Crew Lead Deb Hildebrand. Hosted by event co-chairs Karlee Hilliard and Susan Strick.
- October 2024: A conversation with producers Amy Langer and David Schwartz gave the Ladies a glimpse into the challenges, triumphs and passion that went into the making of *Rutka: A New Musical*. Hosted by event co-chairs Janice Amatulli, Joyce Elkus and Danielle Revelson.
- March 2025: The Big Event: The Leading Ladies' sponsored show, *The Book Club Play*, delighted the Ladies with laugh-out-loud comedy. Hosted by event co-chairs Linda Holthaus and Danute Miskinis.
- May 2025: Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director Blake Robison and Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz, along with guest actors Tess Talbot and Rory Sheridan, demonstrated the art of auditioning. Hosted by event co-chairs Joann Mead and Ellen van der Horst.

OFFICIAL CATERER

eat well

CELEBRATIONS AND FEASTS
www.eatwellonline.com

Together, the members contributed over \$104,000 to support the production of *The Book Club Play*. Brava, Ladies!



Rosenthal Shelterhouse Properties Crew Lead Deb Hildebrand demonstrates making faux alcohol at the August event.



Leading Ladies socialize at the October event.



Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz welcomes the Ladies to the Big Event in March.



Tess Talbot performs an audition monologue for Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director Blake Robison and Associate Artistic Director Joanie Schultz at the May event.

CENTER STAGE

An Exclusive Benefit Concert

On May 29, the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park proudly launched **Center Stage**, an exclusive benefit concert and dinner held at the Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre Stage. This exciting new event was designed to support the Playhouse's main stage productions and education programs for the 2025-2026 season.

The launch of Center Stage was a tremendous success. The event was completely sold out, with 190 guests in attendance. Guests enjoyed an exclusive cocktail reception and live music in the lobby before moving onto the Rouse Stage for a sumptuous dinner, prepared by Chef Renee Schuler of eat well celebrations and feasts. Dinner was followed by a memorable concert experience hosted by Dan Hoard, voice of the Cincinnati Bengals and UC Bearcats, and featuring extraordinary Broadway stars Betsy Wolfe and Nathaniel Stampley, as well as Hannah Ervin, a rising star in musical theatre from CCM. A dessert reception in the lobby with the performers closed the amazing evening.

We extend our deepest thanks to **Honorary Co-Chairs Barbara Weyand and Ellen van der Horst, Producing Co-Chairs Bob Castellini and Woody Taft, Center Stage Committee members, and Playhouse Board President Jamie Leonard** for their leadership and support.

In appreciation of the important work that the Playhouse does in our community, Center Stage received substantial support from both the corporate community in our city and numerous individual supporters of the Playhouse. Thank you to all who helped make this inaugural event a night to remember.



PRODUCING SPONSORS



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LIGHTBORNE

HONORING A LEGACY OF LOYALTY: SUBSCRIBERS WITH 50+ YEARS OF DEDICATION

For 65 years, our extraordinary subscribers have been more than just audience members — they've been the soul of the Playhouse. Their unwavering commitment has shaped our history, sustained our mission, and brought the magic of live theatre to countless lives across our region and across generations.

From the rise of the curtain to every standing ovation — they've been here, season after season, building a legacy of support that connects the Playhouse's rich past to its vibrant future. Their dedication is not just inspiring — it's foundational.

This season, we honor their longtime commitment with a shout out to our most devoted fans. Of course, the list is too long for these pages, so we begin with subscribers of 50+ years. Please go to our website to see the names of these wonderful supporters. Below we share some of their memories

REFLECTIONS FROM SOME LONGTIME SUBSCRIBERS

"I started my subscription as a Mother's Day present, which included my younger sister for a girls' night out. My sister married and moved away, and my mother passed away in 1994. But I've continued to enjoy sharing my subscription with my nieces and friends." — **Judith Koch**



"It's hard to believe we've been subscribers for 57 years. One unforgettable memory is the play *Rain* — the tropical bar set had a thatched roof and real water that sprinkled down like rain. With no air conditioning and warm, humid air, it felt like we were on a tropical island." — **Dave and Diane Moccia**

"Fifty-five years of excellent entertainment! We're grateful for every Playhouse production and honored to play a small part in supporting Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park." — **J.K. Smith**



"Mike and I were dating when I had season tickets with a church group. We debated whether he should get his own — what if we broke up? He bought them anyway. We're celebrating our 50th anniversary this December." — **Jackie Dieckman and Mike Camery**



"I took my husband to *Endgame*, which featured two actors in trash cans. He was a sleep-deprived surgery resident and hated it — he said, 'Don't ever ask me to come back.' We've been subscribers ever since." — **Ronna and Jim Willis**

"There are way too many cherished memories, but some of the best ones were taking our children — and later, our grandchildren — to their first performances at the Playhouse." — **Jane and Frank Caccamo**

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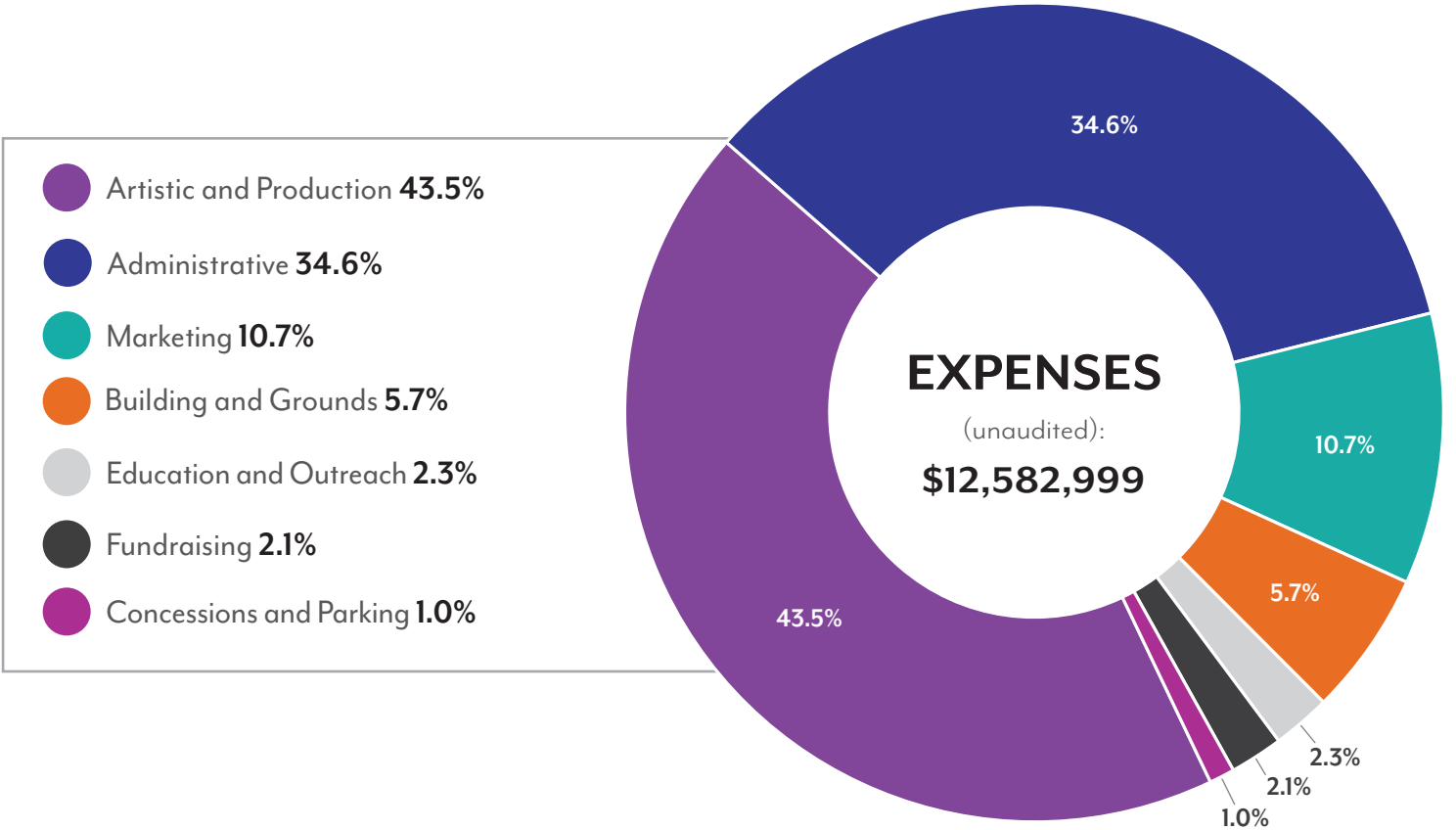
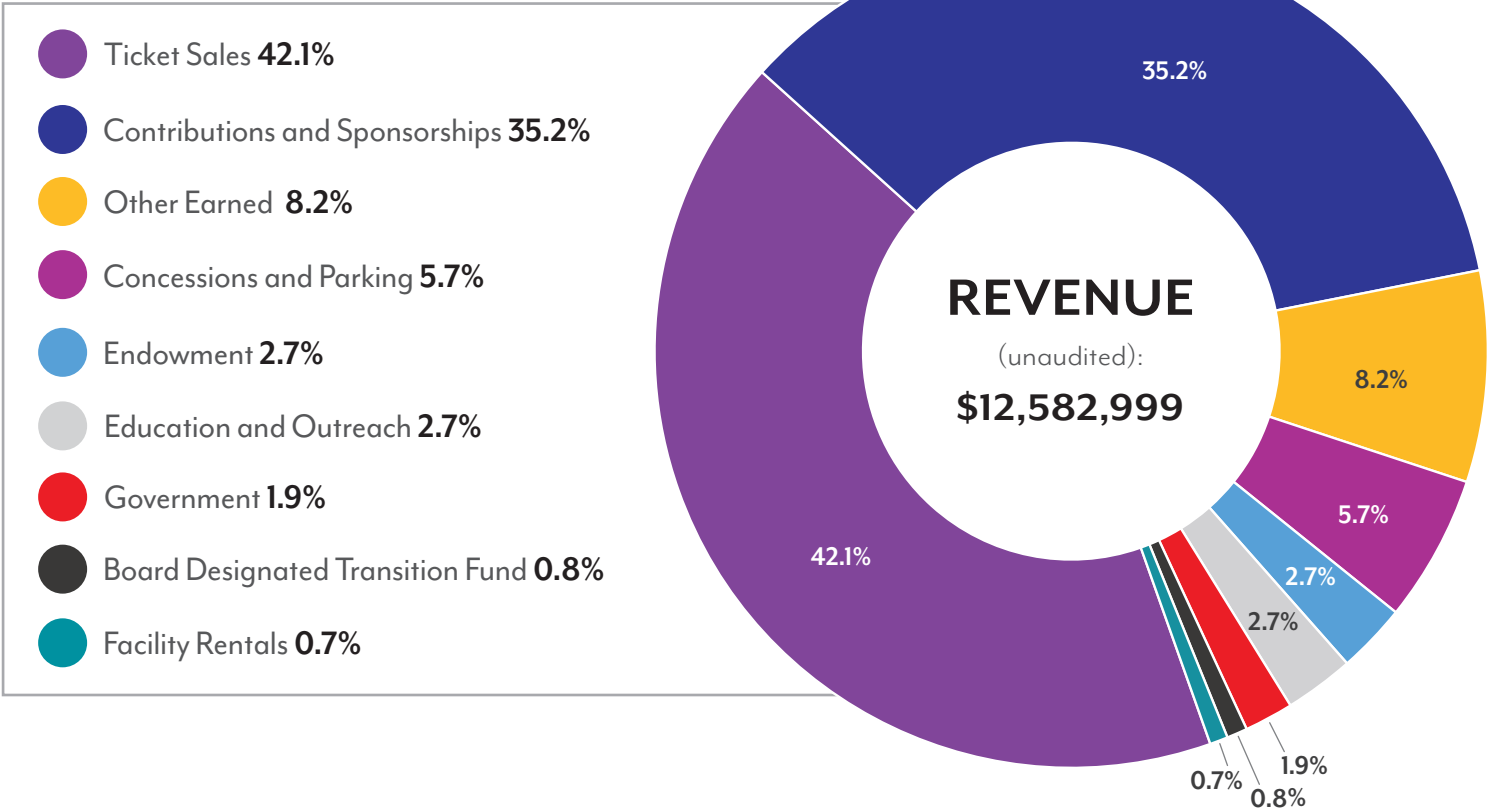
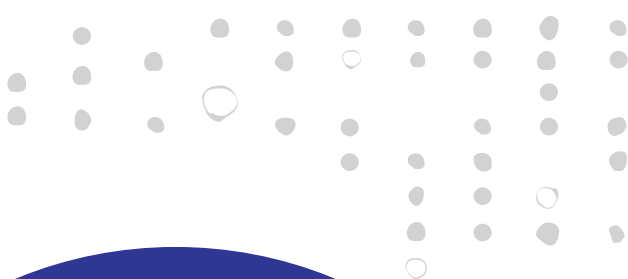
Ohio, whose name originates from the Iroquoian word ‘ohi-yo’, meaning ‘good rivers’, is a testament to the deep connection between the land and the Indigenous peoples who have inhabited it for centuries. The Cincinnati region is ancestral land of many Nations, and Indigenous people are still here today. As a step toward honoring the truth and achieving healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, we recognize and honor the enduring connection these Nations have to this territory. May we reflect on our commitment to understanding, preserving, and celebrating the rich culture of Native Indigenous communities who have shaped and continue to contribute to these lands.

WHAT IS A LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT?

It is the recognition of the Native Americans/First Nations/Indigenous Peoples who cared for these lands prior to removal. Our statement was created with guidance from our partners at the **Urban Native Collective**. For more information, visit urbannativecollective.org.

FINANCIAL REPORT

2024-25 Season



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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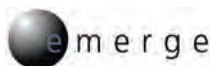
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Front cover (L-R by row): Neagheen Homaifar, Leyla Modirzadeh, Fady Demian, Aryana Asefirad and Sanam Laila Hashemi in *English*; The cast of *Rutka: A New Musical*; Justin McCombs and Teresa Zimmermann in *Dial M for Murder*; DeShawn Harold Mitchell and Shane Taylor in *Primary Trust*.

Photos by Mikki Schaffner.