

2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

UNMATCHED VARIETY
UNEQUALED ARTISTRY



PLAY IN THE PARK
CINCINNATI HOUSE

2019-20 SEASON

ROBERT S. MARX THEATRE

ONCE ON THIS ISLAND

Book and Lyrics by LYNN AHRENS
Music by STEPHEN FLAHERTY
Based Upon The Novel, "My Love, My Love" by ROSA GUY

SEPT. 7 – OCT. 6, 2019



Moe & Jack Rouse and Randolph Wadsworth present
THE LIFESPAN OF A FACT

By JEREMY KAREKEN & DAVID MURRELL
and GORDON FARRELL

OCT. 19 – NOV. 16, 2019



BUDDY: THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY

By ALAN JANES

JAN. 18 – FEB. 16, 2020



LEADING Ladies presents
DESTINY OF DESIRE

By KAREN ZACARIAS

FEB. 29 – MARCH 22, 2020

CANCELLED on March 12



AGATHA CHRISTIE'S
MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS

Adapted for the stage by KEN LUDWIG

APRIL 11 – MAY 9, 2020

RESCHEDULED to 2020-21



SEASON EXTRA!

first first financial bank presents
A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By CHARLES DICKENS
Adapted by HOWARD DALLIN

NOV. 27 – DEC. 29, 2019



ROSENTHAL SHELTERHOUSE THEATRE

MARGARET ATWOOD'S
ALIAS GRACE

Adapted for the stage by JENNIFER BLACKMER

SEPT. 14 – OCT. 27, 2019



2 PIANOS, 4 HANDS

By TED DYKSTRA
and RICHARD GREENBLATT

NOV. 9, 2019 – JAN. 12, 2020



WORLD PREMIERE!

americUS

By UNIVERSES

FEB. 1 – MARCH 8, 2020



ACTUALLY

By ANNA ZIEGLER

MARCH 21 – APRIL 26, 2020

CANCELLED



The Jewish Foundation of Cincinnati presents
BECOMING DR. RUTH

By MARK ST. GERMAIN

MAY 9 – JUNE 21, 2020

RESCHEDULED to 2020-21



Season presented by **SCHUELER GROUP** and **HEIDELBERG DISTRIBUTING CO.**

Season Sponsor of New Work: **THE ROSENTHAL FAMILY FOUNDATION**

Visuals by Tony Arrasmith/Arrasmith & Associates. Photos of Universes: Asia Mark; Gamal Abdel Chasten by Lawrence Turner; Mildred Ruiz-Sapp by Mildred Ruiz-Sapp; Steven Sapp by Arthur Cohen. Naomi Jacobson as Dr. Ruth Westheimer in *Becoming Dr. Ruth* by Teresa Wood. The cast of *A Christmas Carol* by Mikki Schaffner.

LETTER FROM WOODY TAFT

To my fellow Playhouse patrons:

My last year as President of the Board of your Playhouse concluded in ways that I never could have imagined. I have been humbled by the work of my fellow Trustees as our focus changed from producing live theatre to protecting our artists, staff and patrons while still focusing on our core values as an institution and ensuring that when we reopen, we are ready to go. I cannot thank each and every one of them enough for their guidance and support during this time. Let me assure you that as we plan for future performances we will always put you, our patrons, at the center of every decision that we make. Without you, there is no Playhouse.

In my role as co-chair of our Directing the Future capital campaign, I have been overwhelmed by the generosity of our patrons and community. Even as performances were being cancelled, as our subscribers, donors, sponsors and advocates, you continued to financially support the project and share the good news of our new theatre with others. I know I speak for my fellow co-chair, Rob Reifsnnyder, when I say how excited I am about the success we are having in this final major phase of the campaign.

As my term ends and I transition the role of President to Ellen van der Horst, I want to thank you all for making the last two years truly memorable. My love of this institution and this community is as strong as ever and together we will continue to do great things in Greater Cincinnati.

Thank you for everything!



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Taft'.

Woody Taft
Board President

LETTER FROM BLAKE AND BUZZ

Hello from the Playhouse! We hope that everyone is safe, healthy, and happy, finding your new way of living in this very different world.

It is hard to quantify the changes that have occurred since we last prepared this letter for you, our Playhouse family. The world-class theatre you love was cancelled on March 12 for the safety and health of our patrons, artists and staff, ending our 60th anniversary season months ahead of schedule.

The normal rhythm of our year shifted dramatically and we, like so many others, moved our work into the virtual realm, finding new ways to bring art to the region and learning how to connect with you in this space. As the weeks moved on, we experienced first-hand the extreme generosity of our community, from funders accelerating payments to patrons donating their tickets back to support the institution. Without these and many other acts of kindness we would not be where we are today and we wish to express our heartfelt thanks to you all.

Your Playhouse stands ready to adapt to changing times while bringing you the theatrical experiences you have come to expect. We pride ourselves on making great theatre and serving the needs of our region's children — wherever they are. We pledge to you that these efforts will continue, now and into the future. The partnership between the Playhouse and the Tristate community lives on because of your support.

As these shifts took place, we also continued with our capital campaign to realize the new mainstage theatre, Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre. Even as staff vacated the facility, the teams from Messer Construction and TriVersity Construction moved in, continuing the necessary site work to begin construction this fall. More details on the progress of this transformational campaign can be found later in this report, but it is important to share that we are on track and seeing great enthusiasm for this campaign!

We look forward to the day we can all gather in Eden Park and experience great theatre together. We will celebrate that day and never take for granted the joy of community connection. On behalf of the entire staff, thank you for your loyalty this season and we look forward to seeing you soon.



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

Blake Robison
Artistic Director



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Buzz Ward'.

Buzz Ward
Managing Director

CONTINUED IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Each year, ArtsWave raises millions to support more than 100 arts and community organizations across our region. Through their Blueprint for Collective Action, a strategic plan for creating community through the arts, they work through five focus areas to make our region an amazing and vibrant place to live. The Playhouse is proud to partner with ArtsWave to deepen this investment in our community.

During the unprecedented circumstances surrounding COVID-19, restrictions on gatherings, and finally stay-at-home orders, the Playhouse and our fellow arts organizations needed to quickly adapt to be able to serve our community as best we could. Luckily, our work with ArtsWave and their Blueprint helped to guide us. We were therefore able to draw upon the profound power of the arts to keep us all connected and spread joy in the midst of uncertainty.



Funding Arts. Fueling Community.

ARTS DEEPEN ROOTS



1,745 masks made by the costume shop for the staff at the Cincinnati Zoo, The Christ Hospital Health Network, Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition and members of the Navajo Nation (through our continuing collaboration with the Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition).

ARTS ENLIVEN NEIGHBORHOODS

- Shared a video of Bruce Cromer reading the final section of *A Christmas Carol* on social media
- Created weekly e-newsletters filled to the brim with online content
- Curated resources of accessible art on our website
- Held an online Perspectives event with Blake and other guest artists



ARTS PUT CINCINNATI ON THE MAP

10 Monologues of Hope commissioned from **10** playwrights and performed by **10** local actors.



ARTS BRIDGE CULTURAL DIVIDES

2.5 hours of *Destiny of Desire* filmed — with only 24 hours' notice before our shut-down — and viewed by Playhouse and Milwaukee Repertory Theatre patrons in the comfort and safety of their homes.



ARTS FUEL CREATIVITY AND LEARNING

70 free virtual summer camp videos created for students for a total of **23** hours of content.



UNMATCHED VARIETY UNEQUALED ARTISTRY



PRODUCTION SPONSOR



The cast of *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* by Mikki Schaffner.

MEMORIES FOR A LIFETIME

The electrifying musical *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* was a smash hit! Patrons danced in the aisles to over 20 of the iconic rocker's greatest songs like "That'll Be the Day," "It's So Easy to Fall in Love" and "Peggy Sue," along with Ritchie Valens' "La Bamba" and The Big Bopper's "Chantilly Lace." More than 10,000 single ticket buyers enjoyed the show — this is one of the top 10 totals of the last 44 seasons!

"Seriously, this is one you're going to want to see!" — *ArtsWave Guide*

"A rousing homage to a rock 'n' roll pioneer." — *Cincinnati Enquirer*

"Andy Christopher brings an earnestness to Holly that is nerdy, adorable and downright contagious." — *CityBeat*

WHAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS HAD TO SAY:

"I love when Cincinnati audiences let their hair down and ROCK!"

"I thought this show was incredible. I would say the performance of *Buddy* was brilliant! The cast was electrifying."

"I'd rate this a 10!!"



Audience members pose for a *Buddy*-themed photo-op.



**PRODUCTION
SPONSOR**

The Carol Ann and
Ralph V. Haile, Jr.



FOUNDATION

An independent family foundation

Photos of Matthew McGloin and Jefferson McDonald
in *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* by Mikki Schaffner.

MASTERFUL PERFORMANCES

Performed in the round — a rare treat for Playhouse audiences — *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* delighted audiences with its relatable story of nostalgia, joy and growing up with a childhood dream. Since the production’s world premiere in 1996 in Toronto, the show has played more than 4,000 performances (and counting) in its 24-year history and has been embraced by audiences around the world. The Playhouse’s production enjoyed 67 performances, including a week of extension due to popular demand.

“Part of what makes *2 Pianos, 4 Hands* so enduring is that in addition to being incredibly entertaining, audiences see themselves in it whether or not they ever wanted to play the piano.”

— **Tom Frey, Director and Music Director**

Named “Best Musical Actors” in *CityBeat*’s annual “Best of Cincinnati” awards.

“A breathtaking evening of music and acting ... audiences will deem them the best performers to be seen on Cincinnati stages this holiday season.” — ***CityBeat***

“Talented pianists and performers with great comic timing.”
— ***Behind the Curtain Cincinnati***



WHAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS HAD TO SAY:

“Both performers were very entertaining. They made [me] think about my own childhood dreams as well as feel a sense of loss, while being very funny at the same time.”

“The show did not disappoint. The quality of the piano playing was amazing and the acting was brilliant as well. We loved the small, intimate venue. It exceeded our expectations.”

“I have attended plays at the Playhouse for many years and this play ranks as one of my favorites!”

ARTISTICALLY BOLD

The Playhouse is uniquely positioned to bring nationally acclaimed theatre artists to our region. In our 2019-20 season, we commissioned Universes to create *americUS* — a compelling new work for Cincinnati audiences. The production introduced an artistically thematic world, in which the characters were both circus performers and realistic people who tell stories of life in America today.

Universes is an internationally renowned multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary performance ensemble. Together, they inventively blend theatre, poetry, dance, hip-hop, jazz, down-home blues and Spanish boleros to tell stories that move, challenge and inspire audiences. Their stimulating and entertaining productions, often touching on social and cultural themes, are unlike many theatre companies performing today.

“I haven’t seen a show that hit me, made me think, and made me uncomfortable (in a good way) like *americUS* did in a long time.” — **BroadwayWorld**

“It was singing. It was poetry. It was rapping. It was talking. It was amazing.” — **ArtsWave Guide**

The Master of Ceremonies Magnifique Philip Martin sets the scene of the piece with an introduction including this dialogue:

“So follow the dramatic lighting, the microphones, the costumes and all the step-right-ups spliced into this circus that we all find ourselves in, full of expectations and revelations. But don’t be fooled or distracted from the things that demand our attention. Beneath the subtle smiles and the boisterous banter is a multi-layered slice of *americUS* pie.”

“Today is another day of circus, where we are all clowns and ringmasters, using hyperbole whenever possible on our devices and media platforms. Where all you need is a top hat or a bright tail coat to be a Master of Ceremonies here in... *americUS*.”

“*americUS* is an exploration of what it means to be in America at this time — what our joys are, what our challenges are and how we find our way in the midst of some very crazy days. It is a collage in which we weave in and out of the lives of people experiencing what it means to be alive right now in this nation.” — **Joan Herrington, Director**

PRODUCTION SPONSOR ANDREA AND DR. EDWARD HERZIG



Asia Mark, Mildred Ruiz-Sapp and Gamal Chasten with Steven Sapp in *americUS*.



Asia Mark, Steven Sapp, Mildred Ruiz-Sapp and Gamal Chasten in *americUS*.



Gamal Chasten and *americUS* Director Joan Herrington.

WHAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS HAD TO SAY:

“We both felt this was one of the more thought-provoking, well-performed pieces of theatre we have seen at the Playhouse in some time.”

“I’m very proud of Playhouse for bringing this show to Cincinnati.”

“So raw, such talent, so much depth and challenge. Really well done. Best play I’ve seen this year. I want to bring my family!”

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED LOCALLY CRAFTED

NATIONAL RECOGNITION

The Playhouse is a home for nationally-renowned artists, attracting the country's best actors, directors and designers. We are committed to making Cincinnati a destination for new work, premiering more than 80 plays since 1960 and commissioning new works that add to the American theatre canon.

BEYOND THE TONY AWARDS AND BROADWAY: HERE ARE 10 GREAT PLACES TO SEE A PLAY

By Larry Bleiberg, Special to USA TODAY, June 2019

Many winning actors and plays got their start in regional theaters, says Alison Lenox, and these local companies still stage some of the country's best productions. "Regional theater is new, exciting, provocative and makes people talk. It can be so much better than New York." Lenox, publisher of *Treading the Boards*, a directory for professionals seeking work in regional theaters, shares some favorites.

The Playhouse is one of Lenox's personal favorites because it's where she earned her Equity card, cementing her status as a professional actor. She says audiences appreciate the theater's wide variety of programming. "They'll do anything. They'll do classics, they'll do musicals, they'll do new work. It's a great place."



Photo by Tony Arrasmith/Arrasmith & Associates.

DIRECT FROM BROADWAY!

Our variety of programming often features popular new plays that have just appeared on Broadway or the West End. This season featured the first post-Broadway production of *The Lifespan of a Fact*. This contemporary comedy debuted in New York in 2018 and starred Daniel Radcliffe, Bobby Cannavale, and Cherry Jones. *The New York Times* hailed it as "terrifically engaging," and *The Washington Post* called it "a smart, rib-bustingly funny play." The Playhouse production was directed by Associate Artist Wendy C. Goldberg, who also serves as the Artistic Director of the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center.

To deepen our audience's experience with this production, we also hosted a panel discussion with local journalists to dive deeper into the issues around truth and facts as they related to the play.

ABOVE-TITLE SPONSORS MOE & JACK ROUSE and RANDOLPH WADSWORTH



Photo of Kate Rigg, David Whalen and JuCoby Johnson in *The Lifespan of a Fact* by Mikki Schaffner.

WHAT AUDIENCE MEMBERS HAD TO SAY:

"One of your best productions. Excellent play, extremely well cast and directed."

"Inspired me to find a copy of the book."

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES INSPIRED LEARNING

Participation in the arts and live theatre encourages the development of a broad range of 21st-century skills, including creativity, critical thinking and problem solving. Our education programs provide quality, professional theatre experiences for children across Greater Cincinnati, supplementing — and, in many cases, replacing — vanishing school arts programs. The Playhouse believes that the arts are essential to the overall education of all students, and we strive to create arts programs that are equitable and accessible for children regardless of their language barriers, socioeconomic status or abilities.

OFF THE HILL AND OUTREACH TOUR

The Playhouse carries art into our community through our touring shows, bringing theatrical adaptations of cherished classic childhood literature to life in neighborhoods around the Tri-state. In 2019-20, *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* and *Stuart Little* toured through schools (Outreach Tour) and community venues (Off the Hill). All Playhouse touring plays feature professionally designed sets, costumes, sound effects and music. The program has select stories with diverse characters that are brought to life by a cast of our Bruce E. Coyle Acting Intern Company members. Our third production, *Dragons Love Tacos*, has been moved to the 2020-21 season due to the closing of schools in March.



The cast of *The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane* with Squash Academy of Cincinnati students after the show.



Stuart Little performance at Harrison Elementary.

THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY OF EDWARD TULANE and STUART LITTLE



SCHOOL PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Number of Schools: **44**
Number of Performances: **53**

STUDENT ATTENDANCE TOTAL = 10,833



OFF THE HILL PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Number of Partners: **23**
Number of Performances: **23**

OFF THE HILL ATTENDANCE TOTAL = 1,290

WHAT DID YOU LEARN? (EDWARD TULANE SURVEYS)

“Don’t bully other people and their belongings”

“Always have an imagination”

“Love matters”

“Nobody is perfect and we all have problems to deal with”

“That even the tiniest things in life can mean a lot”

“To never give up even if you feel lost”

“That you can’t just think about yourself”

“Life is like a roller coaster — there are ups and downs”

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT!

THE ROBERT AND ADELE SCHIFF FAMILY FOUNDATION



THE P&G FUND OF THE GREATER CINCINNATI FOUNDATION

KATHY AND VISHNOO

JERRY AND
BETSY SHROAT

FIFTH THIRD
FOUNDATION



JOHN C. GRISWOLD FOUNDATION

RON BUNT AND WEI SUN



Friends and family enjoy a post-camp performance at Pogo Play.

SATELLITE EXPANSION, 2019 SUMMER CAMPS

The Playhouse brings our community together, from masterful performances at our facility on the hill in Eden Park to programs throughout our Greater Cincinnati region. For various reasons including geographic barriers, many of those we wish to serve are unable to attend live performances on our two mainstages. Expanding our outreach into the community ensures that our programs remain accessible for everyone, regardless of the neighborhood in which they reside or their socioeconomic status.

For many years, we have brought theatre to our community with enriching educational programs and live touring shows. For the first time in summer 2019, we expanded our annual summer camp with four satellite locations, improving ease of access for children throughout Greater Cincinnati.



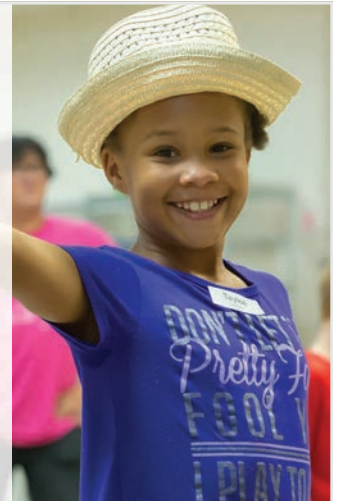
First- through sixth-graders at the Mason Community Center satellite camp perform *Seussical KIDS* for their friends and family.

SUMMER CAMP SATELLITES 2019

154 KIDS
27 SCHOLARSHIPS

**38% DIVERSE
STUDENTS**

Mason Community Center
Pogo Play in Blue Ash
Evendale Cultural
Arts Center
Artsville-Madisonville



2019 summer camp photo by Mikki Schaffner.

“We want to remove the barriers that keep anyone from engaging with any of our programs. By going out to our neighboring communities, we deepen our understanding of each community’s needs so that we can provide better service through the arts.”

— **Daunielle Rasmussen, Director of Education and Community Engagement**

“Jude absolutely loved camp! We enjoyed seeing new confidence and an excitement about participating in more theater in the future. Jude said he loved that all were encouraged to show and be proud of what makes them unique. We love that, too.”

— **Summer Camp Parent**

LAUNCH PAD ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM, 2019 SUMMER CAMPS

The Playhouse is committed to ensuring that all students in Greater Cincinnati have access to the arts, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic status, or physical/cognitive disability. Launch Pad, piloted with our 2019 summer camp and generously funded by the Daniel and Susan Pfau Foundation, equipped Playhouse staff to meet the unique needs of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other sensory challenges. This program was created to make our space accessible in such a way that children with sensory disabilities would be able to experience full participation in our programs without being isolated from their peers.

Launch Pad created an environment in which children with sensory challenges were supported and welcomed, and neurotypical children were enthusiastic about learning how to include their friends with ASD. Far surpassing our original goal of 15 students, we served an estimated 75 children with disabilities.



We envisioned a space where an onlooker would not be able to immediately identify that a child has a disability based on how they are treated by our staff or other children. Each child was given access to a specialized care plan and accommodations, but these plans allowed them to be fully integrated with their peers.



The Playhouse hired a Launch Pad Coordinator and two additional staff aides, who trained all education staff in effective communication strategies and connected with families to plan for the individual needs of campers. This ensured a positive and supportive environment for each child.



Children were provided with "social narrative signs" providing social cues to ease their discomfort in social situations, detailed and concrete schedules, individualized attention from camp aides, and access to quiet spaces and comfort items such as noise-canceling headphones, fidgets and/or weighted blankets.



Ali Orme

Assigned to Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park

THU 4:31 PM

Dear Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park,
Thank you from the depths of my soul for the experience you provided my daughter this week. What you think is a simple daycamp for preschool kids was the most amazing opportunity for my child with Down Syndrome. When I signed her up for this camp I called your office with all kinds of concerns. Your staff simply said, we will take it day by day and adjust. Two weeks before camp I almost tried to cancel because I was worried sick about how my daughter would behave.

Little did I know I would get a call from one of your employees the week before camp making sure I didn't have any concerns or additional questions. Little did I know you would have a staff member there who knows sign language. Little did I know how helpful and caring your staff would be.

For three hours every day for a week my daughter got to be a typical kid. She was able to work through being sad that her mom was leaving her with unfamiliar people, JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER KID. She got to meet new friends, sing songs, dance, and play JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER KID. She even got to immerse her new friends in the world of sign language. The other kids wanted to learn how to communicate with her. Your staff was simply amazing and included my daughter in a world that isn't always so inclusive. For that, I commend you and thank you.

Sincerely,
Ali Orme
"Lilly's mom"



2019 summer camp photos by Mikki Schaffner.

IN-SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

This year, we expanded our subsidized workshops, which bring topics such as actors' skills, theatre professions, public speaking and dramatic interpretation to the classroom at no cost. In addition to acting and theatre skills, students learn to integrate drama into their core curriculum, incorporating storytelling and dramatic writing skills along with books they are studying in class. The workshops are customizable, easier for teachers to schedule and able to be adjusted to fit the needs of each classroom.

WHAT STUDENTS LOVED THE MOST:

- "Learning how to be in front of people"
- "Making my own script and acting it out"
- "The African representation"
- "Working in groups and tableaux"
- "When we wrote about issues that were important to us"

18

SCHOOLS/PARTNERS

200

TOTAL WORKSHOPS

TOTAL WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE IN 2019-20

=100

 = 1,773

WHAT TEACHERS HAD TO SAY:

"I was impressed with the students' creativity. Students now have a deeper understanding of the book, how their own lives relate to the book and different points of view." — *5th-grade teacher*

"The activities enabled some quiet/shy students to come out of their shells. I saw a lot of comfort zones expanding." — *4th-8th grades, St. Anthony School*

"I loved the writing day! This aligned directly to English Language Arts standards. In addition, I learned so much from [the teaching artist] about how I can integrate dramatic interpretation into my classroom in the future. I am so pleased with the results and thankful that my students were given the gift of exposure to the arts." — *7th-grade teacher*

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

RED DRESS INSTALLATION

The Red Dress Installation was presented in partnership with the Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition (GCNAC).

Through this striking visual installation, the GCNAC hopes to bring attention to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. These dresses represent thousands of Native American women who go missing every year. Murder rates for Indigenous women in the U.S. are 10 times the rate of the national average in some areas, and many cases go unreported. This installation was paired with the Playhouse's world premiere production of *americUS*, a theatrical collage that examines topics and issues that impact us as Americans in different ways.



Photos of the Red Dress Installation at Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park.

CINCINNATI VOICES PROJECT

Inspired by the artistic vision of Universes performance ensemble, we partnered with the Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition, the Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust and Humanity Center and the Cincinnati Music Accelerator to create the Cincinnati Voices Project. Artists created original monologues and personal stories in Playhouse workshops and performed them between Saturday showings of Universes' *americUS*. These free events shined a light on the many distinct voices that give our city its pulse.



Performed on Saturday, Feb. 15

The Nancy & David Wolf Holocaust & Humanity Center (HHC) exists to ensure the lessons of the Holocaust inspire action today. HHC educates the community about the lessons of the Holocaust and promotes engaged citizenship. Through innovative programming and partnerships, HHC challenges injustice, inhumanity and prejudice while fostering understanding and inclusion. HHC impacts more than 100,000 individuals each year.

The students who represented HHC in the Cincinnati Voices Project adapted the stories of Cincinnati-based Holocaust survivors, drawing on the experiences of those who have come before us. The performances highlighted the similarities and connections between local survivors and our own contemporary journeys.



Performed on Saturday, Feb. 22

Cincinnati Music Accelerator (CMA), Ohio's first music career accelerator, is an organization that's dedicated to and focused on the development of music creatives, fostering and fueling placemaking, and striving for economic development and impact within the community through the musical arts. CMA believes that Cincinnati has the power to become a vibrant music city and that, through music, a sustainable impact can be made to the community's ecosystem. They want the community to thrive, and for our music creatives to thrive as well. Through the power of song, they believe anything is possible.

The artists who represented CMA in the Cincinnati Voices Project performed original songs and spoken-word poetry, illustrating their journeys as artists in this current time.



Performed on Saturday, Feb. 29

The Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition (GCNAC) exists to preserve and represent the culture and heritage of Native American, Indigenous and First Nations Peoples by, but not limited to, providing education, advocacy and support on contemporary Indigenous issues and by cultivating knowledge about Native American history in local and regional communities.

GCNAC artists performed monologues about their personal experiences for the Cincinnati Voices Project.

The Playhouse and GCNAC partnered to present the Red Dress installation to bring attention to the epidemic of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Learn about the installation on the previous page.

OFF THE GRID: THE SOCIAL CYCLE

The Playhouse continues to draw young professionals (YPs) through Off the Grid — a series of interactive, theatrical experiences designed by YPs for YPs, increasing their interest in the arts and participation in their community.

The theme for Off the Grid this year was the Social Cycle — a mash-up of contemporary social events, such as bourbon tastings and cooking classes, with reimagined stories from classic literature. These unique performances allowed audience members to participate to whatever extent they were comfortable. The Social Cycle received rave reviews from participants.



Team members pose for a photo-op after completing their mission.

THE WAR OF THE MALLS

Thursday, Oct. 17 | Tri-County Mall

In this interactive escape room/laser tag adventure, teams of brave humans tracked down the Martians and eliminated the threat before they destroyed every living thing on the planet!



Audience enjoys an interactive performance and bourbon tasting.

BEAUTY AND THE BOURBON TASTING

Friday, Nov. 8 | New Riff Distillery

This interactive bourbon tasting followed a young photographer who takes a second job at New Riff Distillery to help with her dad's medical costs and gets stuck with a beastly boss. Tickets included one cocktail during registration, three tastings of bourbon and whiskey, and a free after-party featuring live music and a cash bar.



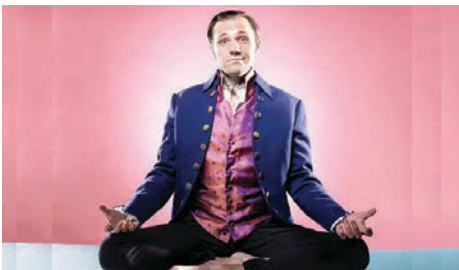
Participants learn to cook while experiencing interactive theatre.

THE COUNT OF MONTE PESTO

Feb. 25, 26 and 27 | Kate's Catering and Personal Chef Services

Celebrity chef Dante Cristo led participants through this interactive, theatrical cooking class. Tickets included two drinks per person and tastings of Italian-based entrees. Audience members helped prepare the dishes and ingredients during class.

Like all arts organizations in our community, we cancelled many of our events to slow the spread of COVID-19. While we hope to bring these events back in 2021, we would also like to celebrate the hard work and creativity of the teams for these projects.



PRIDE, PREJUDICE AND YOGA

March 14, 15, 21 and 22 | Oaklunch Fitness



NANCY BREW AND THE KILLER BAR CRAWL

April 16 | Mt. Adams Bars



THE BRIE MUSKETEERS

May 16 | Vinoklet Winery & Restaurant

ICONIC SETTING INVITING ATMOSPHERE



ROSENTHAL SHELTERHOUSE THEATRE

Over the summer of 2019, the Playhouse underwent the first phase of our capital construction project with renovations to the newly renamed Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre.

The Shelterhouse is steeped in history, and this most recent remodel focused on maintaining the integrity of the theatre's original stonework while bringing it up to current standards. The theatre now features brand new seating with extra leg room and more accessibility accommodations, refinished flooring, new carpeting and tile work, LED house lighting, reconstructed entryway ramps and a hearing loop system which works with existing hearing aids or cochlear implants.

These exciting changes were made possible by a generous gift from The Rosenthal Family Foundation. The Rosenthal Family, led by Dick Rosenthal and his daughter, Jennie, are carrying on the family's leadership support of the Playhouse in memory of Jennie's late mother, Lois.



Seats, risers, walls and flooring were carefully removed during the beginning stages of the Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre remodel.



Buzz Ward, Jennie Rosenthal, Woody Taft, Dick Rosenthal and Blake Robison at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre.



Invitees of the ribbon cutting ceremony gather to watch the first performance in the newly remodeled and newly renamed Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre.

DIRECTING THE FUTURE

Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre will expand what can be done onstage with state-of-the-art technology. The new theatre will enhance audience experience with more leg room, comfortable new chairs, accessible seating in every section, better sightlines and acoustics and easier entry/exit. It will be even more intimate than the current Marx Theatre; with a true balcony elevated and overhanging the lower level, more seats will be closer to the stage. In addition, the elevator for the new building will take patrons up to the balcony or down to the front rows of the orchestra section. Our new state-of-the-art mainstage theatre complex will also include enhanced support facilities, a new costume shop and space for education and outreach activities.



Renderings by BHDP Architecture.

IT IS ONLY INTERMISSION

MARCH 2020

Like many organizations, the Playhouse began the month of March as we normally would from rehearsals to performances to outreach programs. Then, we all experienced an abrupt societal shift as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of these circumstances, the innovative spirit of the entire institution has flourished in an effort to stay engaged with our community and connected to the arts. These are just a few of those stories.



The set of *Actually* after the show's cancellation.



The set of *Destiny of Desire* after the show's cancellation.

DESTINY, INTERRUPTED

We were incredibly proud of our production of *Destiny of Desire*, a switched-at-birth, telenovela comedy. Unfortunately, the show was cancelled after just 12 performances of its 31-performance run. Thanks to quick thinking and collaboration, we organized a multi-camera video shoot of the entire production while the ensemble was still here. The recording was made available for free to ticketholders of cancelled performances, and it was available to rent to anyone as they sheltered in place at home. The show's co-producer, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre, was also able to offer the recording to their patrons online. The Playhouse also provided housing to cast members who did not want to take the risk of traveling during the pandemic.

Note: The Playhouse had to cancel Murder on the Orient Express as a result of the pandemic. The show had already been built, rehearsed and performed as a co-production with Indiana Repertory Theatre, so we are able to include it in our upcoming season. Co-productions have always been valuable in a regular season, but they proved especially vital during this unprecedented time.



Eduardo Enriquez and Esperanza América in *Destiny of Desire*. Photo by Mikki Schaffner.

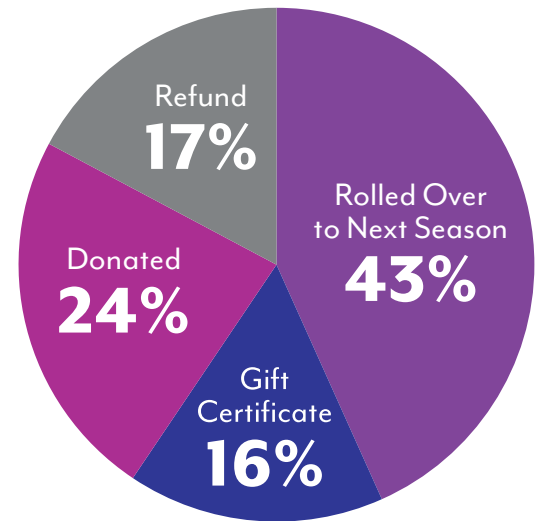


The cast of *Destiny of Desire*. Photo by Mikki Schaffner.

AN OUTPOURING OF SUPPORT

As dramatic programming shifts were taking place, many members of the public asked how they could help. The vast majority (82.8%) have either donated their tickets or rolled them over into next season — a remarkable indication of our patrons’ loyalty, support, and optimism. These financial boosts helped the Playhouse weather the final months of the fiscal year despite massive losses in revenue. Donors continued to renew their support regardless of show cancellations, and corporations and foundations accelerated their payments to assist with cash flow. Thanks to the unwavering efforts of our partners at Fifth Third Bank, the Playhouse successfully obtained a PPP loan through the CARES Act, bringing back employees who were temporarily laid off.

\$343,295
TICKETS CONVERTED TO DONATIONS



MASK RECIPIENTS	MASK DISTRIBUTION
Navajo Nation	600
The Christ Hospital	180
Homeless Coalition	170
Playhouse Ushers	385
Playhouse Staff	200
Cincinnati Zoo	210
TOTAL MASKS TO DATE	1,745

MAKING MASKS

Determined to give back to the community during this time, members of the Playhouse costume shop staff began creating masks for Cincinnati Zoo essential employees. We also began making masks for The Christ Hospital Network, Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition, and members of the Navajo Nation through our continuing collaboration with the Greater Cincinnati Native American Coalition.

GIVING OUR SPIRITS A LIFT

To lift our spirits during quarantine, actor Bruce Cromer (A *Christmas Carol*’s Ebenezer Scrooge) read the final section of Charles Dickens’ novel on video to be shared on our website and social media. Bruce’s virtual performance uplifted patrons who look forward to our cherished tradition year after year.



Bruce Cromer reads the final section of *A Christmas Carol*.

MONOLOGUES OF HOPE

The Playhouse and the Cincinnati community are well known for focusing on new play development and offering support to playwrights from across the country. When that work was put on pause, Artistic Director Blake Robison utilized funds from the Jerome Fey New Play Endowment to create Monologues of Hope. These 10 short monologues, which focus on the theme of hope, were written by local professional playwrights and performed by Cincinnati-based professional actors. Video performances were shared online, free of charge, giving viewers a way to comfort one another from our solitude and to spark joy and optimism for the future.



Actors Candice Handy, Annie Fitzpatrick, Justin Baldwin and Ennaisja Curry were four of 20 local artists who were hired for Monologues of Hope.


CONTINUING TO GROW IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD

Our Playhouse community often connects with us through social media, email and on our website. The temporary closing of our building doors has made these virtual connections more powerful than ever before, and we were able to take this opportunity to explore new ways to connect on these platforms. With the generous endowment support from Roderick and Barbara Barr, we were able to move the Playhouse Perspectives series online in the form of Zoom videos. Behind-the-scenes content was shared weekly in our brand-new e-newsletter, *Playback*. We shared #FlashbackFriday posts, featuring uplifting video clips from past shows; #MagicMonday posts that took viewers behind the scenes of theatre creation; and celebrated odd holidays such as World Book Day and Talk Like Shakespeare Day. We also created a new Art at Home page on our website, which was updated frequently to highlight opportunities for our patrons to engage with local and national art from the safety and comfort of their homes.



Looking back at 52 years on the Marx stage. | [View in browser](#)

PLAY IN THE PARK
CINCINNATI **HOUSE**

Playback
Friday, July 17, 2020



Looking Back
This week 52 years ago, the Playhouse officially opened the Robert S. Marx Theatre! World premieres, beloved classics and [Tony Award-winning shows](#) (like our 2006 production of *Company*) have graced this stage for decades. Explore the Playhouse then and now by [looking at photos from the original construction](#), watching our 60th Anniversary season video and discovering our new season.



THEN AND NOW **ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ann: Our weekly email newsletter, *Playback*, provided patrons a connection to the arts community while staying safe at home.

CONSTRUCTION CONTINUES

We at the Playhouse believe we will emerge from this crisis stronger, and we are committed to the completion of our new mainstage theatre, Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre. We are pleased to report that our project continues to move forward as planned, and site work to prepare for the new mainstage theatre is underway, ensuring the future of your Playhouse while providing jobs and economic stimulus when our community needs it the most. Ground-breaking is still scheduled for the fall, and we anticipate the new theatre will open in late 2022.



Site work to prepare for the new mainstage theatre is underway. Official ground-breaking is still scheduled for the fall.

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Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park is our region's preeminent professional theatre.

WHY WE'RE HERE

We tell stories that entertain, engage, inspire, challenge and connect our audiences.

WHAT WE BELIEVE

We are passionate leaders in the advancement of the arts.

We believe audiences deserve productions that are both artistically bold and wildly entertaining.

We create dialogue that resonates with our community and inspires others to join the conversation.

We warmly welcome audiences from all backgrounds, cultures and walks of life to our shows on and off the hill.

We are exuberant ambassadors of our craft, our colleagues and our organization.



Playhouse rendering by BHDP.

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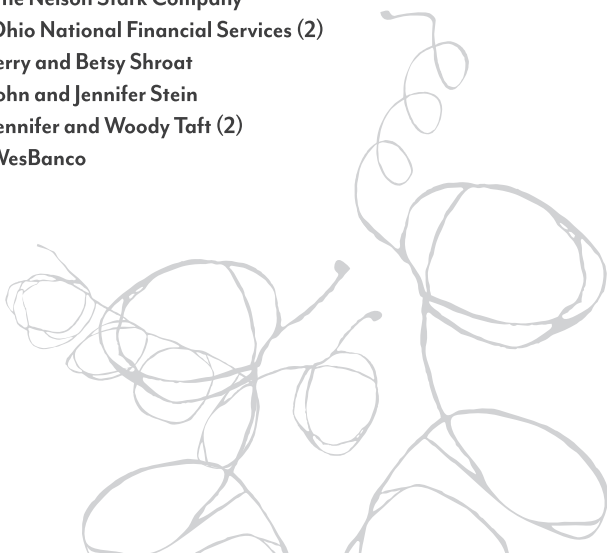
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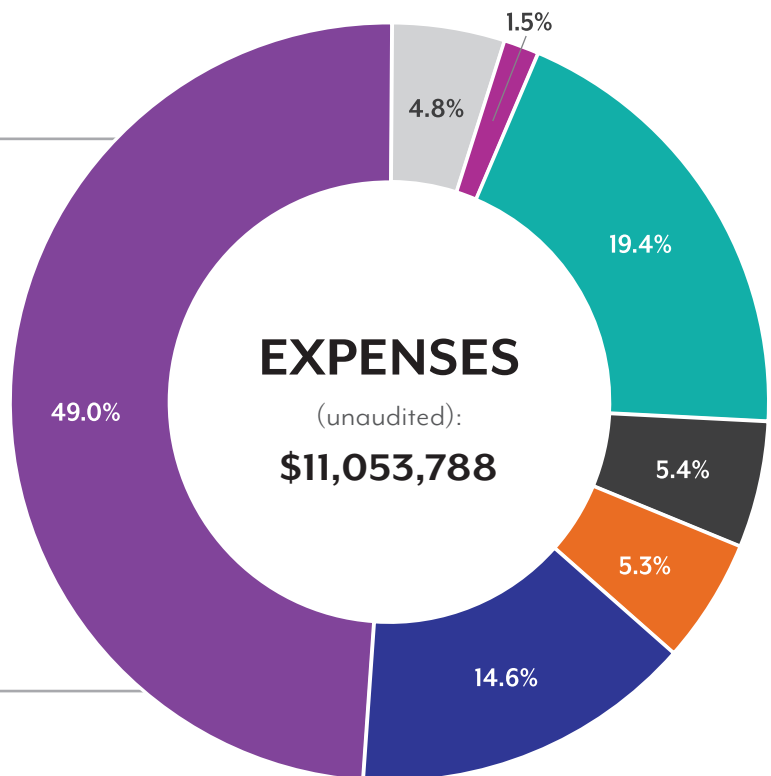
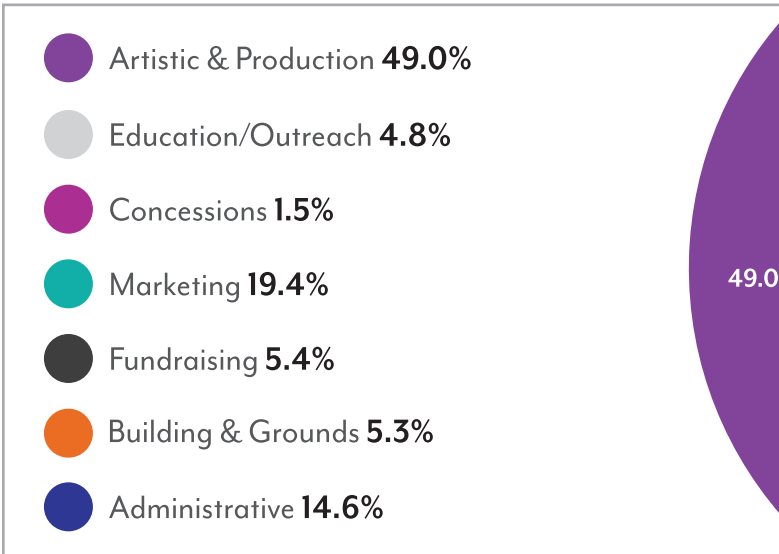
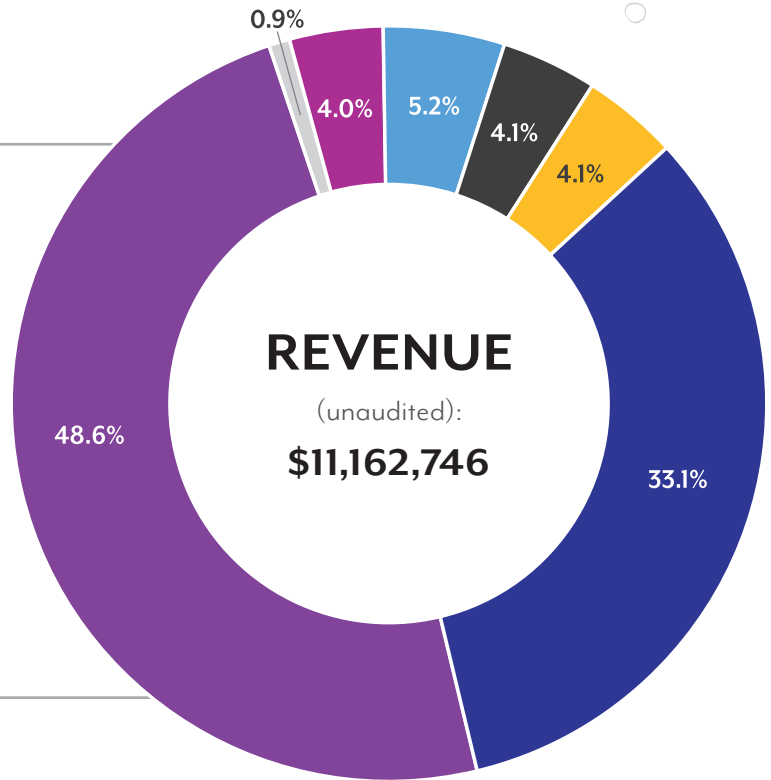
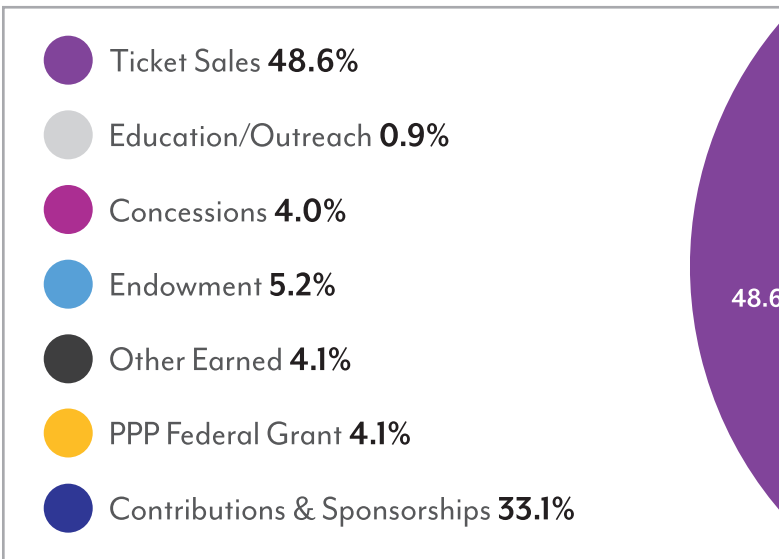
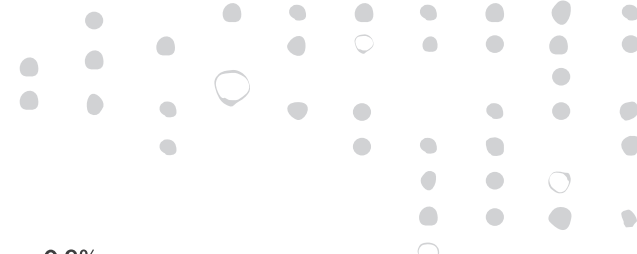
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Photos on cover of Lauren Chanel in *Once on This Island*, the cast of *A Christmas Carol*, and students at summer camp by Mikki Schaffner.