

PORT  
LAND  
PLAY  
HOUSE

THE BOOTH GOES



*Annual  
Report*

Season 17  
2024-2025

our mission

is to celebrate the complexity of the human experience.

our vision

is a world awakened by the wonder of theatre.

we value belonging:

Portland Playhouse works to be radically inclusive onstage and offstage. We serve together. We rise together. We lead with kindness.

we value gratitude:

We are here by the grace and generosity of our community. We honor, join with, and are guided by those who came before us as well as current and future generations.

we value courage:

We challenge the status quo; we take risks. We listen and learn with an openness to change.

Portland Playhouse is located in the heart of the King Neighborhood.

We honor the Chinook, Multnomah, and Kathlamet Nations, as well as the many additional tribes on whose ancestral land we sit. We are housed in what was once the home of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church, where a Black congregation convened for several decades, and which remains culturally significant to many Black families in our community. We honor the spirit, history, and lives of the people who used this building for fellowship, praise, and worship.

# a letter from Founding Artistic Director Brian Weaver



Season 17 brought many gifts to our community. I'll talk about three: **connectivity, pleasure, and grace.**

Connectivity: Amélie's parents were so frightened to lose her from poor health that they kept her locked away from the world, growing up in isolation. Fear has this effect: of chilling and preventing connection, holding our breath, and holding tension. But her curiosity proved stronger – it led her to speak with her neighbor, to ask a boy on a date, and in the end, to connect with the memory of her mother. We learned that the smallest movements – a handwritten note, a box of keepsakes, a photo – can melt the ice of fear.

Pleasure: I had the pleasure of being onstage during Ramona Lisa's performance in *Notes from the Field* along with Kennedy's musical scoring. My role was small, the 'onstage helper,' but the experience was large. For me, to be on stage is to be keenly aware of being alive. In this heightened state of presence, we feel the audience's attention, we hold the promise of storytelling to change the world, and we experience something larger than ourselves moving through us. To watch Ramona bring to life these 17 real human beings and to spend time with them in this intimate state of presence and awareness was joyful, and at times made me feel giddy and glad to be alive. I think this is the call of the actor: to lift up life – the experience of being alive – in all the complexity and contradictions, the mess and the glory; and to show us, the watchers, what is possible. To live fully and be the fullest version of ourselves.

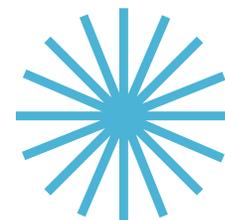
Grace: This is the lesson Scrooge (and all of us alongside him) learns from his four ghostly visitors, and it's the lesson Herald Loomis learns in *Joe Turner's Come and Gone*. I love the Playhouse's *Christmas Carol* because it is so much about US. The audience, on both sides of the stage, is immersed inside the world of the play; the actors are both playing many characters and are also the spirits who are guiding Scrooge (us) on the path of grace. What better place for us to remember that it takes all of us. We need to have grace for each other, and we need to find grace with and through each other.

Herald Loomis showed us the power of learning to forgive yourself – that grace is not something that can be imposed from the outside, but has to be claimed individually. As he found his Song and was able to release himself from the pain and bondage of his past, we are inspired to go on our own journey. Now is the time for our journey of grace.

**These three gifts of grace, pleasure and connectivity made last year a little better, and leave me a little stronger for the journey ahead.**

**Thank you for helping make it possible.**

Brian Weaver



# Amélie

October 2 –  
November 10  
2024

Book by Craig Lucas, Music by Daniel Messé

Lyrics by Nathan Tysen & Daniel Messé

Based on the motion picture *Amélie*, written by Jean-Pierre Jeunet & Guillaume Laurant

Directed by Brian Weaver

Music Direction by Elleon Dobias & Kennedy Verrett

Choreography by Kemba Shannon

33 Performances

3,111 Audience Members  
Reached

48% of performances over 90%  
capacity or entirely sold  
out

100% of the ensemble  
performed as both actors  
and musicians

## Critical Acclaim

"Sweeping its audience off in a blissful current of sound, motion, color, humor and humanity, *Amélie* might best be called 'an experience.'" – Linda Ferguson, *Oregon ArtsWatch*

## Audience Applause

"Magical! Of all the marvelous performances I've attended at Portland Playhouse in the past 15 years, I'd rank this play in the top five."

Production designed by: Dan Meeker (Scenery & Lighting); Wanda Walden (Costumes); Dayna Lucas (Costumes); Alan Cline (Projections); Blanca Forzán (Props); Saibi Khalsa (Sound)





Production designed by: Samantha Kemp (Lighting); Dayna Lucas (Costumes)

November 26 –  
December 29  
2024

# A Christmas Carol

## Critical Acclaim

**“Portland Playhouse’s A CHRISTMAS CAROL is a holiday tradition that never fails to warm the heart, and this year’s production, under the direction of Charles Grant, is in the running for the best yet.”** – Krista Garver, *Broadway World*

## Audience Applause

**“The story was told so creatively. Everyone was excellent and cast perfectly. Loved the music and the enthusiasm. Definitely plan to make this show a new tradition!”**

By Charles Dickens  
Adaptation and Original Lyrics by Rick Lombardo  
Original Music by Rick Lombardo and Anna Lackaff  
Musical Arrangements by Anna Lackaff

Directed by Charles Grant  
Music Direction by Benjamin Tissell

34 Performances

3,611 Audience Members  
Reached

413 first-time Portland  
Playhouse ticket-buyers

2<sup>nd</sup> season with Producing  
Director Charles Grant’s  
vision guiding the show



Production designed by: Sarah Kindler Crone (Scenery); Erica Lauren Maholmes (Lighting); Wanda Walden (Costumes); Sumi Wu (Projections); Rory Breshears (Sound)

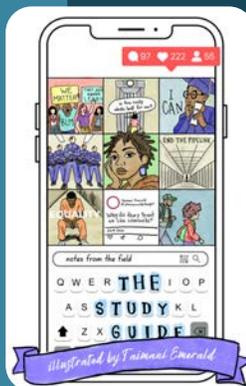
# Notes from the Field

February 19 –  
March 30  
2025\*

By Anna Deavere Smith

Directed by Jackie Davis  
Starring Ramona Lisa Alexander

- 31 Performances
- 2,043 Audience Members Reached
- 293 student group attendees
- 19 partner individuals and organizations hosting and welcoming audience members to the show
- 1 Study Guide to help deepen audience experience and engagement



## Critical Acclaim

“After participating as an audience member...I was struck by what a well-timed gift this production is...If you can be changed, this production will change you.” – Darleen Ortega, Oregon ArtsWatch

## Audience Applause

“This was an unflinching selection, passionately performed. Five stars.”

\*rescheduled from Season 16

April 30 –  
June 8  
2025\*

# Joe Turner's Come and Gone

## Critical Acclaim

**"Like the characters in this transcendent work of theater, Portland Playhouse has persisted: It has dug as deep as required — ever more deeply — to build on the spiritual legacy of a rich artistic heritage that continues to require such persistence."**

– Darleen Ortega, *Oregon ArtsWatch*

## Audience Applause

**"This was one of the most powerful theatre experiences I have ever had."**

By August Wilson

Directed by Lou Bellamy  
Choreography by Oluyinka Akinjiola

49 Performances  
3,489 Audience Members Reached  
20% of ticket-buyers included a donation with their ticket purchase  
8<sup>th</sup> of August Wilson's 10-play "American Century Cycle" produced at Portland Playhouse

\*extended through June 15, 2025

Production designed by: Tyler Buswell (Scenery & Projections); Miranda K. Hardy (Lighting); Wanda Walden (Costumes); Rory Breshears (Sound); Ryann St. Julien (Props); Jessica Carr Miller (Wigs)



# School Programs



## The 2024 Fall Festival of Shakespeare

The Fall Festival is a **non-competitive, region-wide collaboration** between Portland Playhouse and area middle and high schools. Our teaching artists work to **remove the language barrier** Shakespeare can often create, **leveling the playing field** for students with varied abilities and reading levels. Students are **not only performers** in the Festival, but a **large and vocal component of the audience** during the public performances.

- 4 schools (ACMA, DaVinci, Tubman, Park Academy)
- 280 students
- 8 teaching artists
- 10 weeks
- 5 student Shakespeare productions

## PP&S 2024 Summer Partnership

Portland Playhouse partnered with Portland Public Schools to provide **afternoon enrichment programming** for students enrolled in PPS' Summer Acceleration Academy (SAA). SAA aims to provide students with a **successful on-ramp to the school year** by engaging them in **joyful learning opportunities** that address unfinished grade-level learning. In service of disrupting the predictability of outcomes based on race, SAA gives **priority to students who identify as members of persistently underserved racial and ethnic groups.**

- 120 students from
- 8 elementary schools
- 12 teaching artists
- 5 weeks

## Participant Feedback

"I was delighted by the intense community and ensemble that was formed by this festival!"

- Fall Festival Student Participant

"I've seen such huge changes in their voices, their confidence, their understanding of the language, and their ability to collaborate with each other."

- Fall Festival Teaching Artist

"This experience was...exciting, challenging (in a good way) and when things came together in the right way, magical. I had students create in ways that surprised and delighted me."

- PPS Summer Partnership Teaching Artist

Students watch 2024 Fall Festival performances at the Winningstad Theater



# Community of Care

## Financial Accessibility

Arts for All tickets sold – 832

CARE tickets sold – 875

PWYW tickets sold – 1658

## Physical Access

Captioned Performances – 92

Relaxed Performances – 4

## BIPOC Performances

Number of Performances – 12

Community Collaborators – 16

## Radical Welcoming

Number of Performances – 12

Community Hosts – 19

## Sharing Space

Second Sundays – 2

Rentals/Rental Events – 26/188

Space Donations – 8

Presenting Partnerships – 5

**Arts for All:** Patrons with an Oregon Trail Card are eligible for up to 2 tickets for \$5 each.

**CARE** stands for “Community Access Reaching Everyone.” A limited number of \$25 CARE tickets are available for every performance.

**PWYW** stands for “Pay What You Will.” All BIPOC performances plus the first Wednesday after opening of each production are PWYW.

We began offering **Relaxed/Sensory Friendly performance experiences** during Season 17, eliminating haze, smoke, strobe and harsh lighting effects, and sudden jarring noises for one performance of each production. We continued our practice of **projected open captions** for the majority of season performances.

We continued to create audience spaces that **center the experience of patrons who identify as Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color (BIPOC)**, with each production including 3 designated BIPOC performances plus supplementary events.

In conjunction with *Notes from the Field*, we piloted a **“Radical Welcoming” program** – borrowing a concept from community organizing, wherein we actively sought out community members with diverse perspectives and experiences who had some connection to the themes of the show. These individuals were invited to **serve as performance hosts**, welcoming audience members and sharing briefly about their work and their interest in the production’s message.

In addition to **renting out and donating use of our Theater/Sanctuary and Studio spaces**, we piloted Second Sundays “friend-raising” events in Season 17. Led by our Development team, **Second Sundays are opportunities for deeper connection** between our supporter community, neighborhood businesses, the work on stage, and the artists who make that work.

## Season 17 Community Partners

Painted Entertainment LLC/Art as An Outlet, Volunteers of America and VOA Men's Circle of Color, Miss'ipi Chefs, wRite to Heal, Equitable Giving Circle, Bravo Youth Orchestra, Cascadia Health, Trice Occupational Consulting, Deeper Learning Advocates, African-American Women of Lake Oswego and Surrounding Areas, Open Signal Portland, iUrbanTeen, Portland Public Schools, On The Inside, Feed the Mass, Black Community of Portland, Brown Hope, Coming to the Table, Zen in Black Skin, Oregon Black Resource Network, Children's Institute

# Social Prescriptions

As part of our continued commitment to building a community of care, Portland Playhouse introduced our **Social Prescription Series** in Season 17. Offered to **anyone in the community**, this initiative connects friends, partners, artists, healers, and practitioners offering wellness resources and services. With Social Prescription programming accompanying each Playhouse production, we **explored the specific themes** of the show in addition to discussing **thought-provoking questions impacting our Community**. Together, we enjoyed snacks, drinks, and the warmth of a **healing, sacred, intergenerational, and welcoming space**.

Out of this Series, we piloted a **more formal Social Prescriptions Program in partnership with Cascadia Health**, exploring how theatre can serve as a pathway to wellness in a more clinical setting.

Cascadia's services span from prevention to healthy lifestyle education to intensive treatment when needed, encompassing a **systemic approach to health management** for adults, children, seniors and families. The mental healthcare program at Cascadia, with whom Portland Playhouse directly partnered for this initiative, provides **evidence-based, trauma-informed treatment** for people of all ages, specialty mental health services for those in the corrections system, and programs for those with chronic and severe mental health challenges.

Through the Social Prescriptions Program, Cascadia mental health providers "prescribed" season subscriptions to Portland Playhouse, inviting participants to attend performances and gatherings free of charge, and encouraging these individuals to engage with theatre not only as a social event, but also as a prescription for connection, joy, and collective healing.

The pilot welcomed 7 participants, many of whom described their experience as uplifting and restorative.

Moving forward into Season 18, we will be continuing and expanding Social Prescriptions in partnership with Cascadia.

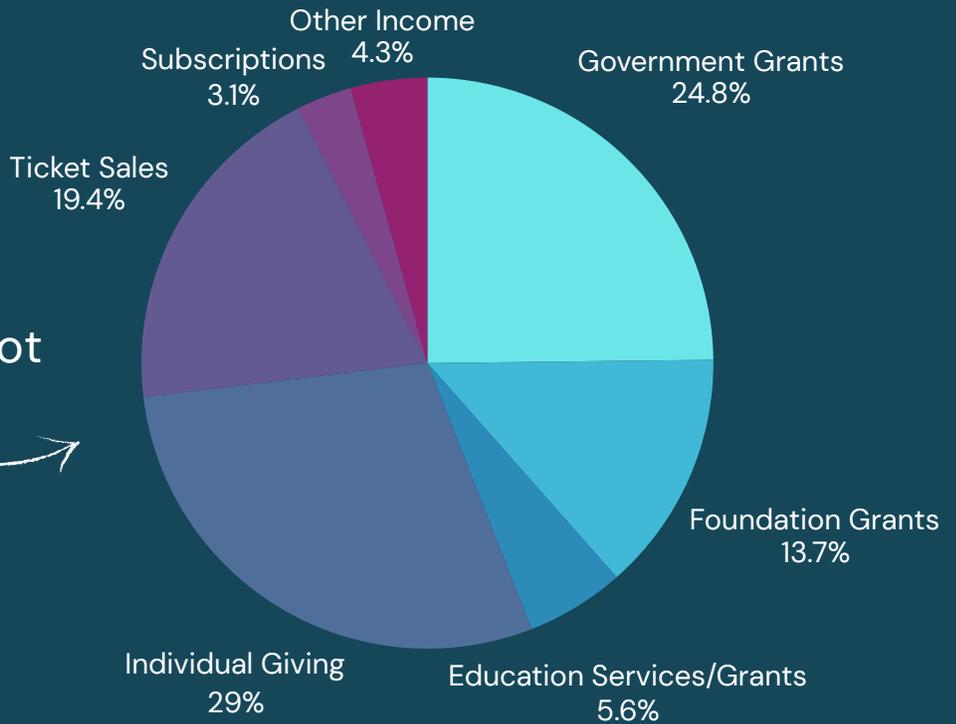
At the Playhouse before an *Amélie* performance, fall 2024. Photo by Cassie Greer



# Finances

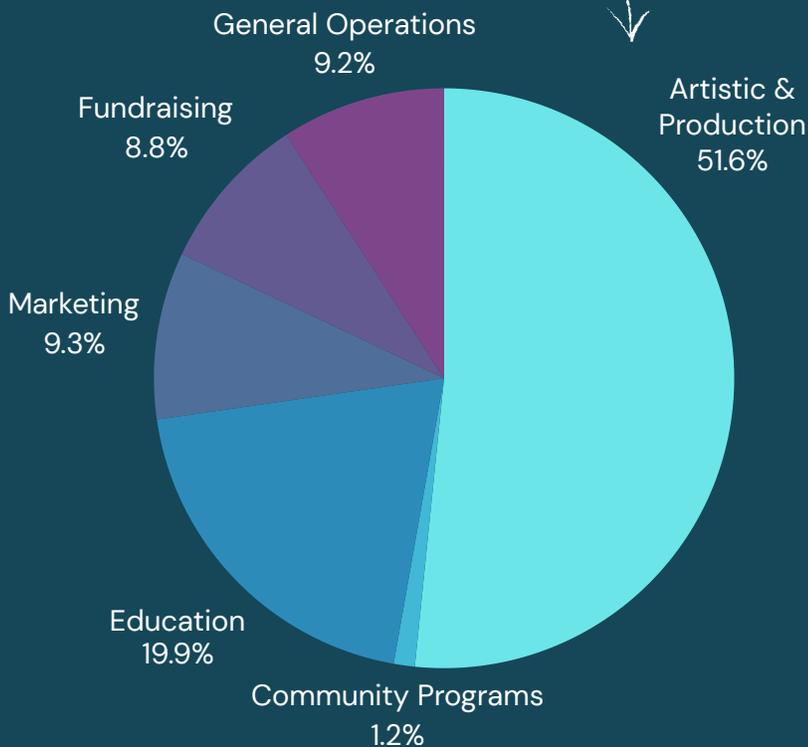
Revenue  
\$2,057,273

Revenue Snapshot



Expenses  
\$1,906,929

Expense Snapshot



As the curtain closes on Season 17, we find ourselves **surpassing the financial challenges** that have confronted so many organizations this year. We are proud to declare that **we ended this season with a small profit**. This significant achievement was made possible by two powerful forces: the **unwavering generosity** of our patrons and our **disciplined commitment to maintaining low costs** without sacrificing the **quality that defines our work**.

Portland Playhouse  
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Portland, OR 97211  
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## *Season 17 by the numbers*

- 10 Staff Members
- 12 Board Members
- 130 Volunteers
- 123 Artists Employed
- 693 Students Served
- 147 Season Performances
- 252 Subscribers
- 2,055 Donors, including
- 787 First-Time Donors