

PHILADELPHIA THEATRE COMPANY

at the

Suzanne Roberts Theatre

ANNUAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2022-DECEMBER 2023



philadelphiatheatrecompany.org

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

It is an honor to be in my sixth season on the Board of Directors of Philadelphia Theatre Company, and my second season as Board Chair. The 2022-23 Season marked a turning point for PTC, one that was ushered in by the addition of Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky to the staff. Even in the face of challenges – the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inevitable growing pains of leadership transition – it was impossible not to be excited about the year that lay ahead!

And what a year it was! Tyler and Taibi arrived at PTC with a vision and a drive unlike any other, and the past 18 months have been a testament to their hard work. However – perhaps even more critically – none of this could have been possible without you, our audiences and donors. Your generosity in supporting PTC is what keeps the lights on at the theatre, fills the seats night after night, and allows us to do the work we do. And every dollar you give is a dollar that goes right back into the production of transformative theatre.

This is a critical moment for American theatre, and philanthropic support is more important than ever. On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for being a part of PTC's legacy by supporting our 2022-23 Season. As we look ahead to 2023-24, which is already off to a strong start with community programming like Little Amal, the return of PTC's education program, and the Philadelphia premiere of Whitney White's *Macbeth in Stride*, we hope you will join us again by making a gift, or subscribing. There is so much coming to the Suzanne Roberts Theatre – you won't want to miss any of it!

Gratefully,

Gary Deutsch
Chair, Board of Directors



LETTER FROM TAIBI & TYLER

The past 18 months have been a whirlwind: moving to Philadelphia and joining the PTC staff, mounting four immense productions, working with the PTC Board of Directors and the artistic community of Philadelphia to revamp our mission statement, piloting new education programming and community engagement, and celebrating the 15 year anniversary of the Suzanne Roberts Theatre. And looking back, all we can say is – WOW!

We have always had big plans for PTC, but never in our wildest dreams could we have imagined what a special year it would be. We have you to thank for this; everything we have done has been made possible by you, our supporters and audiences. You are our community and our biggest cheerleaders. We cannot say it enough: thank you for believing in our mission, and supporting us.

Our new mission statement affirms that PTC is more than just a place to watch plays; it is a vital civic institution, dedicated to fostering understanding, empathy, and transformation through the creation of extraordinary theatrical experiences. We have been laying the foundation for this work over the past year; of all PTC's accomplishments, our inaugural Black Theatre Night and the return of students to the Suzanne Roberts Theatre stand out as particularly meaningful. This report is for you to see everything we've been up to for the past 18 months, and what your support has enabled us to do. We hope you are as excited about it as we are.

It's hard to believe, but we really are just getting started. Thank you for being a part of the PTC community, and joining us on this amazing journey. We hope you have enjoyed it as much as we have.

Gratefully,

Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky
PTC Co-Artistic Directors



A LOOK BACK: SEPT 1, 2022-DEC 1, 2023

The past 15 months have marked a pivotal moment in the life of PTC: we welcomed new leadership, and set a new vision for the future while remaining firmly grounded in our roots as a producer of exciting contemporary work that resonates both locally and nationally. Looking back, we are thrilled to share this report with you highlighting all you made possible in the last year through your financial support.

OUR NEW MISSION*

Philadelphia Theatre Company is a vital civic institution dedicated to the creation of extraordinary theatrical experiences that reflect the essential issues and ideas of our time, and which foster connection, understanding, and transformation.

We engage and strengthen our community through exceptional productions of new and contemporary plays and musicals, inspiring education programs, and mutually beneficial civic partnerships.

We develop exciting new work that resonates both locally and nationally, and uphold a deep commitment to be a fully inclusive, welcoming home for the artists, audiences, and people of Philadelphia.

*Updated July 2023

Suzanne Roberts Theatre

PHILADELPHIA



THE TATTOOED LADY

October 29 - November 20, 2022

Book by Max Vernon and Erin Courtney

Music by Max Vernon

Directed by Ellie Hayman

Major support for *The Tattooed Lady* was provided by the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, with additional support from the National Alliance for Musical Theatre and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Ida Gibson is a grandma and model citizen happily concealing her shocking past . . . until a parade of tattooed ladies hijacks her living room to host an otherworldly intervention in this daring theatrical work. This brash musical was PTC's first commissioned work since 2007 and represented the culmination of years of work on behalf of the staff and creatives to bring this piece to life. *The Tattooed Lady* featured a cast of Broadway and New York theatre veterans, including Emmy Award nominee Jackie Hoffman in the role of Ida Gibson. The production was nominated for 3 Barrymore Award Nominations: two nominations for Outstanding Supporting Performance in a Musical, and for Outstanding Choreography/Movement.



EMPATHITRAX

February 10 - March 5, 2023

Written by Ana Nogueira

Directed by Nell Bang-Jensen

Production Sponsor PECO

Honorary Producer Linda & David Glickstein

Honorary Associate Producer Gayle & David Smith

The futuristic *Empathitrax*, written by East Falls native Ana Nogueira, tells the story of a young couple who turn to a pharmacological breakthrough to try to save their fractured relationship. This production showcased the pinnacle of Philadelphia talent, with the entire cast and creative team hailing from the local arts community.



LADY DAY AT EMERSON'S BAR & GRILL April 6 - 30, 2023

Written by Lanie Robertson
Directed by Jeffrey L. Page

Honorary Producer Alice George & Lou Oschmann

The final show of the 2022-23 Season, *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*, transformed the stage of the Suzanne Roberts Theatre into a South Philadelphia dive bar. PTC Resident Artist Jeffrey L. Page directed the immersive production, which starred Philadelphia jazz vocalist and rising star Laurin Talese as the talented and troubled Billie Holiday. *Lady Day...* was nominated for a Barrymore Award for Outstanding Lighting Design.



MACBETH IN STRIDE November 3 - 19, 2023

Written by Whitney White
Directed by Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky

In association with Shakespeare Theatre Company and Brooklyn Academy of Music

In October 2023, *Macbeth in Stride* kicked off the inaugural season of our new Artistic Directors Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky. Co-directed by Taibi and Tyler, this 90-minute rock musical written by Obie Award-winner Whitney White uses pop, gospel, and R&B to trace the fatalistic arc of *Lady Macbeth* while lifting contemporary Black female power, femininity, and desire.

THE TERENCE MCNALLY AWARD

Among every generation of playwrights, there are a select few whose work not only reaches but truly transforms the hearts and minds of audiences. Terrence McNally was one such playwright. A provocateur known for his sly and subversive – but staggering and poignant – work, McNally left an indelible mark on the world of American theatre. In his honor, PTC presents the annual **Terrence McNally Award** to a Philadelphia-identified playwright. The winner receives dramaturgical support, including a workshop and public reading at PTC, for the development of the winning work in addition to a cash prize.

The 2022-23 McNally Award went to *Acetone Wishes and Plexiglass Dreams*, by Stephanie Kyung Sun Walters. Walters is a Barrymore-nominated actor, playwright, and teaching artist in Philadelphia. She is a recent alum of InterAct Theatre Core Playwright, a current American Theatre Group PlayLab artist, and serves as the Lead Artist on the Philly Asian Performing Artists' Playwrights Project.

PTC produced a reading of *Acetone Wishes...* on May 15, 2023 at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre. The reading was directed by Wai Yim, and starred Daniel Kim, Dana Liu, Chris Park, Arthur Robinson, and Sung Yun Cho.

Support for the 2022-23 Terrence McNally Award was provided by the Terrence McNally Foundation.

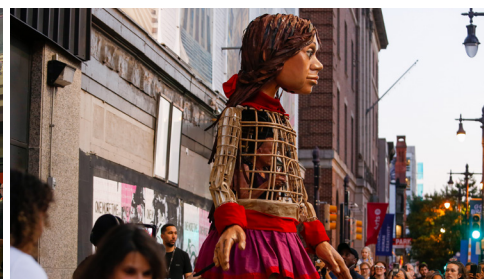
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

PTC works within Philadelphia communities to create long-term relationships with our partners, uplifting our neighbors while broadening the reach of our art. Partners from the past year included Spiral Q, FringeArts, Now and Forever Tattoo (Kristel Oreto), Pink and Blues, WURD, Theatre in the X, Black Theatre Alliance of Philadelphia, and The Brothers' Network.

WALK WITH AMAL

On September 13, 2023, PTC welcomed "Little Amal" to Philadelphia as part of her momentous walk across the United States. This 12-foot puppet representing a Syrian refugee girl is traveling around the world to spread awareness of displaced peoples everywhere, and PTC was the first organization approached by The Walk Productions to curate a community-based event for Little Amal's arrival in Philadelphia.

PTC teamed up with FringeArts, Spiral Q, and Broad Street Ministry to execute "Will You Just Let Me Sleep?" which was designed to draw attention to Philadelphia's unhoused population. PTC's Artistic Directors offered pre-walk remarks at the Suzanne Roberts Theatre before Amal set off on her journey down Broad Street, dodging rats, bright lights, and loud noises as she searched for a comfy place to lay her head. She finally arrived at City Hall, welcomed joyously by Batala Philly's drumline and accompanied by hundreds of Philadelphians of all ages and backgrounds.



COMMUNITY NIGHTS

In recent years, theatres across the country have been implementing Community Nights as a strategy to engage with community members of color, and audiences from other marginalized groups. PTC Co-Artistic Directors Taibi Magar and Tyler Dobrowsky decided to implement this initiative starting in April 2023 in an effort to make the theatre a more fully inclusive place. Working with WURD Radio, Theatre in the X, and the Philadelphia Black Theatre Alliance, PTC hosted the first Black Theatre Night in Philadelphia on April 6, 2023. For this special evening, Black community members were invited to the theatre for a free performance of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*. This event was hosted by Tiffany Bacon, WURD Radio correspondent who joined the creative team of *Lady Day* as the production's costume designer. The evening ended with a talk-back with Bacon and *Lady Day* star Laurin Talese, which was broadcast on WURD.

Black Theatre Night returned on November 3, 2023, for PTC's production of *Macbeth in Stride*. This time, we added Theatre Philadelphia to our roster of community partners and teamed up with Theatre Philadelphia Executive Director and ethnographer Sabriaya Shipley to cultivate an exhibition of strong Black women in Philadelphia. Highlighting the themes of *Macbeth in Stride*, PTC Director of Education and Public Programs Anjoli Santiago teamed up with Shipley to photograph and interview Black women representing all economic and artistic sectors in Philadelphia, and to display these photos in the lobby of the Suzanne Roberts Theatre. Amber Lang, a local DJ, was hired to play during the pre-show mixer in the lobby, and *Macbeth in Stride* creator and star Whitney White took part in a talkback following the performance.

Similar Community Night initiatives are planned for the remaining productions of the 2023-24 Season.



Photos by Paola Nogueiras



Photos by Paola Nogueiras

EDUCATION

PTC is thrilled for the return of education programming as part of our vision for the future. Our initial steps included welcoming students to a matinee performance of *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill* and a performance of *Macbeth in Stride*. PTC will welcome students to special matinees designed with them in mind for all future productions at PTC, as well as create in-school workshops and conversations with production artists to deepen student's engagement and learning. Newly designed educational programming is rolling out during the 2023-24 Season to great acclaim from students and teachers.

Ushering in our new era of educational programming is Anjoli Santiago, PTC's new Director of Education and Public Programs in September 2023. She brings over a decade of experience as an educator and facilitator of educational programming for students ranging from elementary to adulthood. She has designed and led workshops covering trauma-informed practices, social and emotional learning implementation, integrating arts into the academic curriculum, and more. Her expertise, experience, and wide network of connections with teaching artists and educators within the city makes her the ideal person to help reintroduce students and teachers to the power of PTC.

EVENTS

ARTISTS CIRCLE SALON

Artists Circle Members gathered on Sunday, April 16, 2023, for an intimate performance by *Lady Day* star Laurin Talese, and a talkback with Dr. Diane Turner, curator of Temple University's Charles L. Blockson Afro-American Collection. Talese and Turner conducted a discussion about Black history in Philadelphia, how Black history in Philadelphia impacted the development of jazz music in the region, and about Billie Holiday's role in the popularity of jazz music.

OPENING NIGHT GALA

On Friday, November 4th, 2022, Philadelphia Theatre Company celebrated its first commissioned World Premiere musical in many years with an Opening Night Gala – the first in-person gala hosted by PTC since 2019. Our Gala featured live music, sword swallowers, and trapeze artists in addition to carnival games and temporary tattoos, bringing our guests into the surreal circus at the heart of *The Tattooed Lady*.

This event raised over \$250,000 to support the artistry and work of PTC's artists throughout the 2022-23 Season.

SPRING SOIREE

Philadelphia Theatre Company invited the community to a special event on Monday, May 22, 2023. The evening commemorated the 15 Year Anniversary of the Suzanne Roberts Theatre and brought donors, subscribers, and community members together to explore the theatre and celebrate PTC's past, present, and future. Attendees were invited to explore backstage with exclusive tours, enjoy food and drink, and enjoy music by *Lady Day* star Laurin Talese. Over 175 audience members joined PTC for this celebration of fifteen amazing years calling the Suzanne Roberts Theatre home.



Photos by Paola Noguera



Photos by Paola Noguera



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION

Over the last two years, PTC’s Board of Directors conducted an evaluation of the organization’s commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility. As a result of these discussions, PTC has released the following statement on our commitment to DEI&A: “PTC is dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment regardless of age, race, ability, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, citizenship, or socioeconomic background. We embrace diversity, ensure fairness, and promote a sense of belonging for artists, audiences, and employees, while striving to remove barriers that may prevent the people of Philadelphia from attending, engaging with, or participating in our programs.”

REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

Over the past year, PTC doubled down on attracting and retaining new audiences. The aim of this work is to accelerate our engagement with all communities of Philadelphia, and to build an audience that reflects the diversity of our city. The most salient example of this work in the 2022-23 Season was the piloting of Black Theatre Night, which invited Black community members to enjoy a night of theatre at no cost. The success of Black Theatre Night has reinforced how important it is to make the theatre a radically welcoming place, and has informed PTC’s community engagement and audience development efforts going forward.

AFFORDABLE TICKET PROGRAMS

PTC believes that live theatre belongs to everyone, so we are doing everything we can to make live theatre accessible to all audiences. For the 2022-23 Season, we offered the following affordable ticket initiatives:

- 10Tix Presented by PNC Arts Alive: a ticket subsidy initiative at Philadelphia Theatre Company that made a select number of \$10 tickets available for every performance.
- Access Live: \$2 tickets made available for PA ACCESS cardholders through a partnership between PTC and ArtReach.

ACCESSIBILITY

PTC was proud to offer the following accessibility programs during the 2022-23 Season:

- Audio Description - Select Saturday matinee performances are crafted for audience members who are blind or low vision. During the performance, through wireless headsets, a trained audio describer fills in the details of the action on the stage, which might otherwise have been visually missed.
- Open Captioning - For audience members who are hearing impaired, a large LED captioning screen, positioned beside the stage, scrolls text of the dialogue/lyrics in tandem with the dialogue/lyrics of the performance.
- ASL-Signing - In partnership with HandsUP Productions, PTC offered sign language interpreting services.

PTC'S NEXT CHAPTER

During the 2022-23 Season, the PTC Board of Directors, along with PTC's Leadership, embarked on a period of Strategic Planning designed to illuminate a path to PTC's future in line with the vision of its new Co-Artistic Directors.

The Strategic Plan emphasizes PTC's role as a vital civic institution with a commitment to staging theatre that fosters understanding and connection, and serves as an inclusive home to artists across the region. The Strategic Plan also explores diverse streams of revenue for PTC – including the addition of a new, flexible, multi-use performance space – adapting to challenges posed in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ratification of this plan represents a new era for PTC, one that is marked by artistic excellence, a commitment to community, and the enthusiastic embrace of a bold new vision for what a regional arts organization can do.

PTC embarked on the first major step in implementing the strategic plan in August 2023, when we hired Anjoli Santiago, M.S.Ed as our new Director of Education and Public Programs. We are committed to focusing on our education and civic engagement initiatives as core elements of our work while expanding our artistic footprint in the city.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

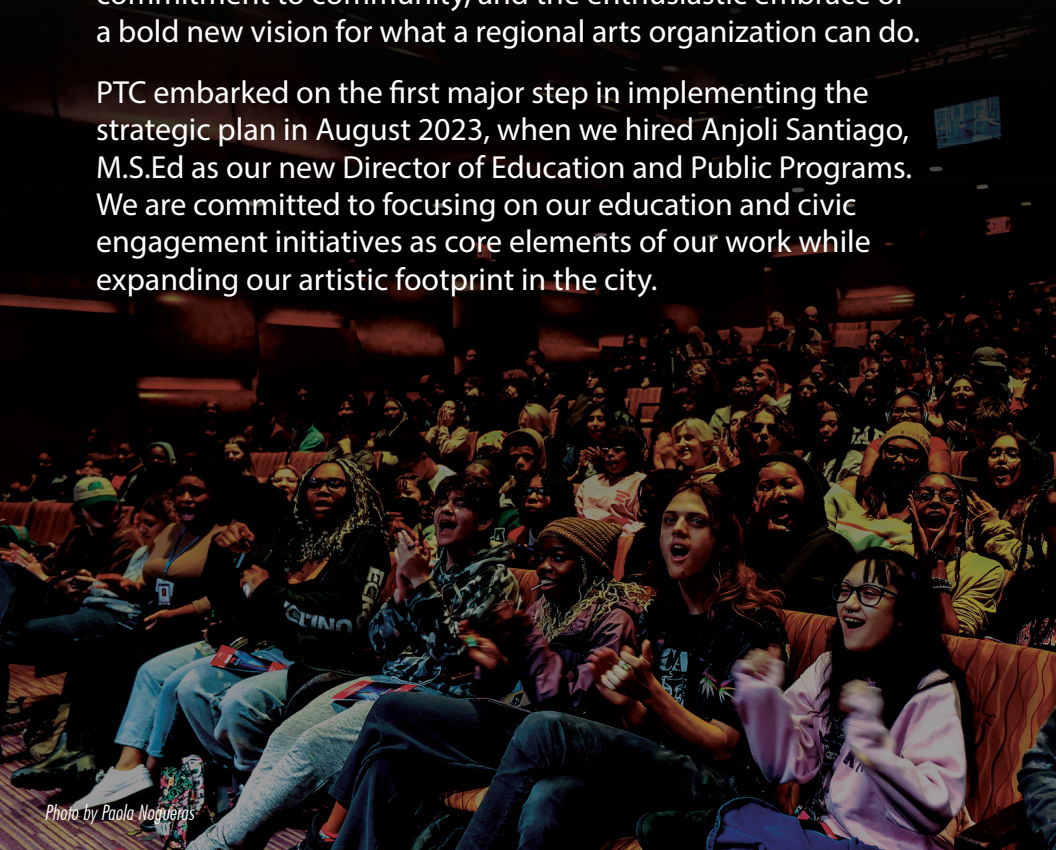
When you support PTC, you support the vitality of Center City, Philadelphia. Arts and culture is a major contributor to the economic health of the city, drawing audiences from across the country to Philadelphia and encouraging consumer spending at local restaurants, bars, and stores.

PTC is also a major employer of creatives; during the 2022-23 Season, we employed over 192 artists in the form of actors, designers, directors, musicians, stagehands, and more; in addition to our Philadelphia based full- and part-time staff and stagehands.

SUZANNE ROBERTS THEATRE: A HUB FOR THE ARTS ON BROAD STREET

The Suzanne Roberts Theatre is far more than a home for PTC; every year, we work with companies of all sizes to host over 100 events in our flagship theatre. Your support of PTC makes it possible for us to offer our space year-round to partners from all over the Greater Philadelphia area, representing everything from small arts organizations to major universities. Our theatre is without equal in Philadelphia: the highest level of accessibility, luxurious comfort, and the capability to host a variety of events right on the renowned Avenue of the Arts. We are fortunate to not only produce our own theatre in this magnificent building, but to collaborate with our neighbors to utilize this jewel of Center City to its full potential as a boutique performing arts venue.

Between PTC events, rentals, and companies-in-residence, the Suzanne Roberts Theatre was in use for 279 days between September 1, 2022 and December 31, 2023, and welcomed over 23,000 patrons during that time.



RENTAL PARTNERS BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 AND DEC. 31, 2023:

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*as of December 01, 2023

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