

Theatre at Ford's Theatre

Broadening our theatrical offerings and deepening the ways we use art as a catalyst for connection and learning, the 2022-2023 theatre season was a great success at Ford's Theatre.



Kimberly Gilbert, Joe Mallon and Nancy Robinette in *The Trip to Bountiful* (2022). Photo by Scott Suchman.

FALL 2022

The Trip to Bountiful

By Horton Foote; Directed by Michael Wilson

Carrie Watts dreamed of escape from the bustling city and of a return to simpler times in her beloved Bountiful, Texas. Michael Wilson directed Nancy Robinette as Carrie Watts with Joe Mallon as her son, Ludie and Kimberly Gilbert as her daughter-in-law, Jessie Mae. This classic American drama was a touching portrait of family, what we hold onto and what we leave behind.



Cast of the 2022 Ford's Theatre production of *A Christmas Carol* (2022). Photo by Titus Ogilvie-Laing.

HOLIDAY 2022

A Christmas Carol

By Charles Dickens; Adapted by Michael Wilson;
Directed by Michael Baron

The ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Future led the miserly Ebenezer Scrooge on a journey of transformation and redemption. Originally conceived by Michael Baron, this music-infused production captured the magic and joy of Dickens's Yuletide classic. Acclaimed actor Craig Wallace returned for the seventh year to play Ebenezer Scrooge in our annual holiday tradition.

2022-2023 Season at Ford's Theatre

52,756
audience members.

144
onstage performances.

904
tickets distributed through our
Free First Preview initiative.

\$47,293.36
donated to For Love of Children through
A Christmas Carol company's annual
holiday charity drive collection.

93%
of our actors were local to the D.C.-area over
the last five years.

155
local artists hired.

2
Helen Hayes nominations.



Seema Sueko, Dominic Taylor, Sheldon Epps, José Carrasquillo and Rickerby Hinds. Photo by Titus Ogilvie-Laing.

WINTER 2023

The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look

This free, three-day public festival provided a first look at new plays in development with our first cohort of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) playwrights in The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions initiative. Highlights included play workshops and public readings of new works by playwrights Pearl Cleage, Dominic Taylor and Rickerby Hinds.



Carrie Comper and the cast of the musical *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* (2023). Photo by André Chung.

SPRING 2023

SHOUT SISTER SHOUT! | East Coast Premiere
By Cheryl L. West; Based on *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* by Gayle F. Wald;
Music Direction by Sheilah V. Walker; Choreographed by William Carlos Angulo; Directed by Kenneth L. Roberson; Production Supervised by Sheldon Epps

This new musical told the story of Sister Rosetta Tharpe —one of America's most influential rock, R&B and gospel crossover singers and guitarists. The spirited and emotionally charged production illuminated this charismatic music forerunner and the authentic roots of rock-and-roll.

Critical Acclaim

“ Ford’s Theatre’s *Trip to Bountiful* showcases three of DC’s preeminent actors in performances worth way more than the price of the ticket. Each in her own way transcends her role as written, and together they transport the entire play beyond the time in which it was written – which is indeed a bountiful trip.
– DC Theater Arts Review of *The Trip to Bountiful* ”



Nancy Robinette and Emily Kester in *The Trip to Bountiful* (2022). Photo by Scott Suchman.

“ When it sings, *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*...is all thrills. The charge comes most electrifyingly from the evening’s star, Carrie Compere, who dedicates body and soul to the story of a singer anguished by conflicting loyalties to her music, her mother and her maker.
– Peter Marks, *Washington Post* Review of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* ”

“ Ford’s Theatre’s *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* is a triumphant telling of the life of Sister Rosetta Tharpe... Director Kenneth L. Roberson’s masterful execution of playwright Cheryl L. West’s book figuratively takes the audience to church.
– DC Theater Arts Review of *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* ”

Sensory-Friendly Performances

Ford’s Theatre was excited to continue our in-person Sensory-Friendly programming and hosted Sensory-Friendly performances during our productions of *A Christmas Carol* and *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!*. These special performances are designed to create a welcoming theatre experience for individuals with autism or those with other sensory sensitivities. As Ford’s expands and refines the scope of our accessibility offerings, we will continue to evaluate and learn how we can better serve our audiences and visitors in the years to come.



Carrie Compere in *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* (2023). Photo by André Chung.

“ As a nonspeaking autistic who communicates using a letter board, I recently attended the very necessary and appreciated Sensory-Friendly presentation of the new musical *SHOUT SISTER SHOUT!* at Ford’s Theatre in DC...I was completely gobsmacked by the incredible and powerful singing performances and storytelling carried out by the amazingly talented and versatile Cast and Crew... Ms. Carrie Compere, is able to truly, soulfully and skillfully bring the audience along on this important but not well known story of the struggle of Ms. Tharpe and her life long journey of working in the music industry while striving for a place in it that included diversity and acceptance.
– Sensory-Friendly Performance Audience Member ”

The Ford’s Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look

“ An opportunity to experience the *A First Look* theatre event was a true theatre treat like no other!
– A First Look Audience Member ”

In February 2023, we hosted *The Ford’s Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look*, a free, special series of events that featured public readings for three new theatrical pieces: *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard* by Pearl Cleage; *Young and Just* by Dominic Taylor; and *Blackbox* by Rickerby Hinds. These pieces were commissioned through The Ford’s Theatre Legacy Commissions, an initiative in which Ford’s has forged partnerships with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) playwrights at the forefront of defining the future of the American theatre. The commissions explore underrepresented historical figures and illuminate stories that might not be as well-known in the racial struggle for equality and civil rights.



The cast in the reading of *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard* (2023). Photo by Titus Ogilvie-Laing.

“ I appreciate the opportunity to see a free, live performance on the weekend. The quality of the event was superior and it’s an honor to be invited into a play-in-process.
– A First Look Audience Member ”