



IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024 Season



Impact At-A-Glance



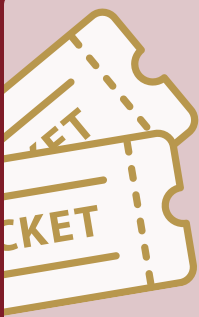
67,459

Audience Members



229

Onstage Performances
of 3 Mainstage Productions,
A First Look new works festival and
our one-act *One Destiny*



830

Tickets Distributed
through our Free First
Preview initiative



100%

of actors were
local to the D.C. area



920 Teachers

directly served by Ford's
education programming



422,667

Historic Site Visitors

22,342 Students
directly served by Ford's education programming



Pictured on cover: Derrick D. Truby Jr. with Nia Savoy-Dock, Kaiyla Gross and Kanysha Williams in the 2024 Ford's Theatre Production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, directed by Kevin S. McAllister. Photo by Scott Suchman.

Letter From Our Director

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is my pleasure to share Ford's Theatre Society's 2023-2024 Season Impact Report with you.

Ford's Theatre Society is proud to steward President Abraham Lincoln's lasting legacy and cultivate a nationwide network of educators dedicated to continuing Lincoln's unfinished work. Thanks to the support of our community, Ford's is able to examine the American experience through compelling theatrical performances and improve the visitor experience for patrons of all abilities, in-person and online.

The achievements of our 2023-2024 season truly stand out thanks to you and your loyal commitment to Ford's Theatre. As you review this report, I hope you feel a sense of purpose and satisfaction in the impact your engagement has helped to manifest.

With the opening of the Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership in spring 2025, and the expansion of the Ford's Theatre campus, we are eager to realize the transformation in store for our Ford's family. I invite you to stay involved and continue your personal journey at Ford's so we can together set the stage for what's to come.

With gratitude,



Paul R. Tetreault
Director

2023-2024 Theatre at Ford's Theatre

Broadening our theatrical offerings and deepening the ways we use art as a catalyst for connection and learning, the 2023-2024 theatre season was a true success at Ford's Theatre.

FALL 2023

WORLD PREMIERE:

Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard

By Pearl Cleage; Directed by Seema Sueko

This powerful world premiere was the first fully-staged play produced from The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions. Playwright Pearl Cleage explored the election of Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr., Atlanta's first Black mayor. Cleage's unique theatrical voice turned Atlanta into a full-blooded character while allowing the audience to feel what it was like to be part of a true historic moment in this southern capital city.

“

“Sueko's direction is fast-paced and draws you further into this historical tour. It feels like you are looking out of the window of a train trying not to miss all the sights as you pass by... If you can, make sure you see this production and bring your children and grandchildren. It is important that these stories are remembered.”

– MD Theatre Guide Review of *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard*



Susan Rome, Billie Krishawn, Tom Story and Constance Swain in *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard* (2023). Photo by Scott Suchman.

HOLIDAY 2023

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. 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.



Craig Wallace and Justine "Icy" Moral in
A Christmas Carol (2023). Photo by Scott Suchman.

SPRING 2024

Little Shop of Horrors

Music by Alan Menken; Lyrics and Book by Howard Ashman; Music Direction by William Yanesh; Choreographed by Ashleigh King; Directed by Kevin McAllister

Little Shop of Horrors was a non-stop blast, horror comedy, love story, rock musical that has become one of the most treasured pieces of American musical theatre. Audiences were taken on a wild ride through Skid Row, as Seymour tries to keep the ever-growing plant a secret while trying to demonstrate to his co-worker Audrey that she is the girl of his dreams.



"If ever there was a staging to soothe the soul, it's this one... The cast and crew have hit on something organically human and genuinely touching: The characters' desire to be loved – or failing that, for their devotion to yield some sign of life. When Seymour pleads, "Grow for me!" it's heartbreaking."

– Washington Post review of *Little Shop of Horrors*

The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look



Charlayne Woodard in the reading of *A Designer of Note, A Woman of Style* (2024). Photo by Rachel Flannery.

In January 2024, we hosted the second *The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look*, a free, special series of events that featured public readings for three new theatrical pieces: *A Designer of Note, A Woman of Style* by Charlayne Woodard; *SISTER X* by Nambi E. Kelley; and *The American Five* by Chess Jakobs. These pieces were commissioned through The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions, an artistic initiative that invests in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) playwrights at the forefront of defining the future of the American Theatre. The commissions explore historical figures and illuminate lesser-known stories in the racial struggle for equality and civil rights.

“

“It's thrilling to be in the room at the birth of the new... All these works-in-progress lived up to their mission to present hidden historical figures – and to discover and delight... In its second year, and with a cohort of playwrights already selected for the future, *A First Look* is well on its way to becoming a must-attend event on the DC theater scene.”

– DC Theater Arts Review of *The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look*

Quill to Curtain: Crafting Plays Inspired by History



Nambi E. Kelley and participants in Ford's Theatre's Quill to Curtain Workshop. Photo by Jack Pritt.

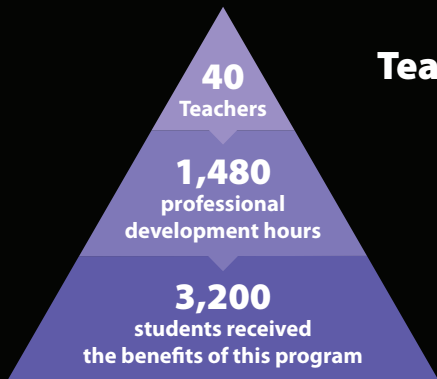
New this season, Ford's Theatre Society launched Quill to Curtain, a free workshop for writers of all levels. The workshop took place in conjunction with *The Ford's Theatre Legacy Commissions: A First Look* festival and focused on narrative storytelling featuring a historical figure or event. Themes covered historical research, the use of primary sources, creative license, crafting the storyline, character development and connecting the past to the present. Due to the popularity of the workshop, more opportunities will be offered during our 2024-2025 season.

“

“Nambi was an incredible mentor and teacher! She provided insightful information on the craft and process of writing, and she really cared about the playwrights there. I was admittedly nervous to speak with her because she's so accomplished as a writer, but she made me and everyone there feel at ease and helped us talk about our projects with confidence.”

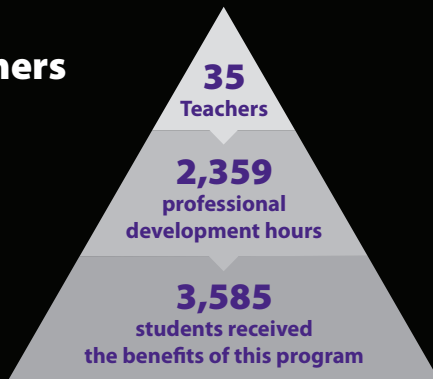
– Quill to Curtain participant

A Snapshot into Ford's Education



Summer Teacher Institutes

Teachers



National Oratory Fellows



National Oratory Fellows and delegates 2024. Photo by the Ford's Theatre Education Department.

570
Teachers participated in a
professional development
workshop, both in-person
and virtually

Students

3,465
experienced a guided tour of the Historic Site
led by a member of the Education Team

5,635
experienced a Virtual Field Trip

4,203
participated in our Oratory Programming

7,474
attended a Student Matinee



Student performing
at Stand Up, Be Heard.
Photo by the Ford's Theatre
Education Department.

What Our Participants Say



“Our trip was PHENOMENAL! Thank you for having us. The kiddos were amazed and learned a great deal. Please let the storyteller in the theatre know that his presentation was stellar. We all felt like we were actually there when it happened... We would love to continue to partner with you to offer amazing experiences to our students.”

– *Teacher participant in a Historic Site Field Trip*



Participating teachers attend the Summer Teacher Institute: *Catherine B. Reynolds Civil War Washington*. Photo by Heather Cipu.



“My classes just completed our Civil War and Reconstruction section today, and I feel like my time with Ford’s transformed this unit in every positive way possible. I was able to use multiple activities, discussion prompts and resources that were provided for us in my classroom and my students responded amazingly... Plus, I have been able to share these with other teachers in my department and region, and the overwhelming response is positive. My time this summer allowed me to grow as an educator and person, and it has translated to my teaching.”

– *Summer Teacher Institute participant*

Lincoln Oratory Residency and Festival



Students at the National Oratory Festival. Photo by Carolina Dulcey.

The Lincoln Oratory Festival enables students to experience how the power of public speaking can communicate ideas and inspire others. Classes study speeches by a diverse group of historical orators, including Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass and Mary McLeod Bethune, and work with a Ford's Teaching Artist over a series of classroom visits to expand their vocabulary, develop public-speaking skills and build confidence as they bring great speeches to life. The festival culminates with participating classes performing the speeches on the historic Ford's Theatre stage. This year, 356 local students and 16 teachers participated in this intensive, hands-on program.



"A sincere thank you to you and your team at Ford's Theatre. Being part of the Lincoln Oratory Residency and Festival was truly an honor for Haycock's 4th grade students and families. . . Our students grew in both confidence and speaking ability during their time in the Oratory Residency. So many Haycock families reached out to tell me how happy they were to have their kids involved in this amazing program. The culminating festival was equally amazing. Seeing the kids perform on that iconic stage was surreal for everyone."

– Teacher participant in the Lincoln Oratory Festival

Historical Programming

In addition to our mainstage productions, Ford's offers seasonal daytime programming that integrates the history of Ford's Theatre with live theatrical performance.

History on Foot - Investigation: Detective McDevitt

1,990 students, teachers and lifelong learners participated in *Investigation: Detective McDevitt*, a walking tour of downtown Washington, D.C., that explores the Lincoln assassination conspiracy. A virtual version is also available to classrooms across the country.



One Destiny

64,549 students, teachers and lifelong learners viewed *One Destiny*, a one-act play that tells the story of Lincoln's assassination through the eyes of two men who were present that night. This production was available to see live in the historic theatre and virtually "on demand" for students, teachers and history enthusiasts from around the country.

Jonathan Atkinson and Joe Mallon in the 2023 Ford's Theatre one-act production of *One Destiny*.
Photo by Carolina Dulcey. Background photo by Gary Erskine.

Cabinet Conversations

Cabinet Conversations: *Moving Forward: Reflecting on Civics and Social Justice*



In September 2023, in advance of our world premiere production of *Something Moving: A Meditation on Maynard*, virtual audiences were invited to be in conversation with playwright Pearl Cleage, historian Dr. Hilary N. Green and dramaturg Dr. Faedra Chatard Carpenter. Hosted by Ford’s Artistic Programming Manager Erika Scott, guests discussed civics, memory and Maynard Holbrook Jackson, Jr.

In April 2024, Cabinet Conversations returned to explore how the natural world inspires artistic exploration with Debbie Crane from The Nature Conservancy, Marc Petrosino from Monkey Boys Productions and Tim Helmer and Franc Alicea from The Paused Reviews Podcast. Panelists discussed myths around carnivorous plants, how puppetry brings a “strange and interesting plant” to life and how *Little Shop of Horrors* has resonated over the years as a pop culture phenomenon.

Cabinet Conversations: *Earthly and Otherworldly*



Written Then, Spoken Now



From left to right: Kaiyla Gross, Nia Savoy-Dock, John Floyd, Denise J. Hart, Dr. Jonathan W. White and Dr. Edna Greene Medford at the 2024 Ford's Theatre book talk, *Written Then, Spoken Now: African American Letters to Lincoln*. Photo by Andrew Buchsbaum.

This year, Ford's Theatre launched *Written Then, Spoken Now*, a history-based public program. This program brings historians and performers together to create a one-of-a-kind event where the arts support the illumination of voices from the past. For the inaugural program, Ford's presented *Written Then, Spoken Now: African American Letters to Lincoln*. University of Maryland history PhD and acclaimed Lincoln scholar Dr. Jonathan W. White, historian Dr. Edna Greene Medford and dramaturg Denise J. Hart came to discuss letters that were written to President Lincoln that were represented in Mr. White's books, *To Address You As My Friend: African American Letters to Abraham Lincoln* (University of North Carolina Press, 2021) and *A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022). Select letters were performed on stage by actors, bringing voice to the past.



"What a wonderful evening. The presentation of the historical context combined with the performances of the readers, fused well for a great learning opportunity. I'm confident that almost all of us in the audience were educated and entertained. That format of hosting an author, additional speakers with contextual detail along with performers led to an outstanding educational opportunity."

- *Written Then, Spoken Now* attendee

Sensory-Friendly Performances

Ford's Theatre has long been committed to creating an inclusive visitor experience on our historic campus, and we are continually working to expand the scope of our accessibility offerings to ensure we serve all audiences. This season, Ford's hosted two sensory-friendly performances during our productions of *A Christmas Carol* and *Little Shop of Horrors*. These performances are designed for individuals with autism, cognitive and sensory sensitivities, who can benefit from a relaxed theatre environment.



Tobias A. Young, Jake Loewenthal, Lawrence Redmond and Jay Frisby meet guests at the meet and greet following the sensory-friendly performance of the 2024 Ford's Theatre production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. Photo by Carolina Dulcey.

“With great excitement and gratitude, this past Saturday I attended the sensory-friendly presentation of *Little Shop of Horrors* at Ford's Theatre in D.C. While I so appreciated access to this show via the sensory-friendly construct, this presentation of *Little Shop of Horrors* is a theatrical phenomenon that everyone should experience regardless of having a disability and/or disorder - or not. The whole show is an incredible and festive experience for all the senses.”

– Sensory-Friendly performance audience member

Building Ties with Our Community

This year, Ford's Theatre continued to build ties through several partnerships across our community...

- 2023-2024 Season - Ford's Theatre participated in the Veteran Tickets Foundation's Tickets for Troops (Vet Tix) program which provides free tickets to those currently serving and veterans of all branches of the US military.
- November – December 2023 - The company of *A Christmas Carol* raised \$66,403 for Hope and a Home, an organization whose mission is to empower low-income families with children in D.C. to create stable homes and lasting change. Over the past 15 years, the company of *A Christmas Carol* has raised \$1,058,795 for D.C.-area charities.
- March – May 2024 - Ford's Theatre partnered with the United States Botanic Garden during our spring 2024 production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.
- May 2024 - Ford's Theatre Society and the Institute for Politics, Policy, and History presented a free event for the public, *Lincoln, A Providential President*.



Screengrab from *Lincoln: A Providential President* - Part 2 Panel Discussion with Michael Steele.

Lincoln's Legacy, Our Legacy

Ford's Theatre is steeped in history, and we are always looking forward. President Abraham Lincoln's legacy as a great American has never been more important, or more relevant. *Lincoln's Legacy, Our Legacy* is a \$52 million campaign to transform Ford's Theatre into a vibrant, visible and accessible destination to explore leadership principles and find new ways to bring Lincoln's legacy to life for current and future generations.

With the public opening of the Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership at Ford's Theatre, we will achieve the following objectives and outcomes:

- This space will allow Ford's to bring our rehearsals on-site.
- This initiative will expand our capacity to provide on-site programs for D.C. Public School and Public Charter School students and teachers.
- Ford's will increase our public offerings to include readings of books and plays, discussions with historians and journalists, workshops, historical happy hours, panels on relevant social issues and events featuring dialogue about civics and leadership, author talks and community conversations.
- This expansion will address critical rehearsal, education and meeting space needs for Ford's Theatre artists and the D.C. theatre community by creating a new anchor space that is fully accessible and centrally located in the District.
- These new facilities will be available to partner arts and humanities organizations across D.C. and provide critically needed space for other performing arts organizations.
- The building's renovation will enhance the artistic and cultural opportunities available to both local residents and tourists in downtown D.C.



Rendering courtesy of OTJ Architects.

Ford's Theatre's Campaign for the Future



Photos courtesy of Consigli Construction.

With the soon-to-be-completed Frances and Craig Lindner Center for Culture and Leadership at Ford's Theatre, we are increasing our capacity to instruct and inspire on the Ford's campus, both in-person and virtually. In this new space, we will draw on our strengths as a working theatre and the power of our historical identity to cultivate vital voices from artists, scholars, educators and students as they explore elements of President Abraham Lincoln's leadership.

The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala

In June 2024, Ford's Theatre hosted its *Annual Gala* where The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker Emerita of the United States House of Representatives and philanthropist and co-founder, CEO and Chairman of Blackstone, Stephen A. Schwarzman were recognized and awarded the 2024 Lincoln Medal. These recipients, through their achievements and personal attributes, exemplify the lasting legacy of Abraham Lincoln. Funds raised from the *Annual Gala* support the artistic and educational efforts of Ford's Theatre, enabling thousands of visitors each year to find inspiration and encouragement in the achievements of one of our nation's most beloved presidents. This year honored outstanding librarians and featured performances by Michael Urie, Bernadette Peters, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Emmy Russell and Josh Groban.



Susan Egan, Michael Urie, Bernadette Peters, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Emmy Russell and Josh Groban perform at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*, June 9, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Carol Rosegg.



Michael Urie, Mychal Threets, Michelle Ross, Ricci Yuhico, Richard Reyes-Gavilan and Susan Egan at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*, June 9, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

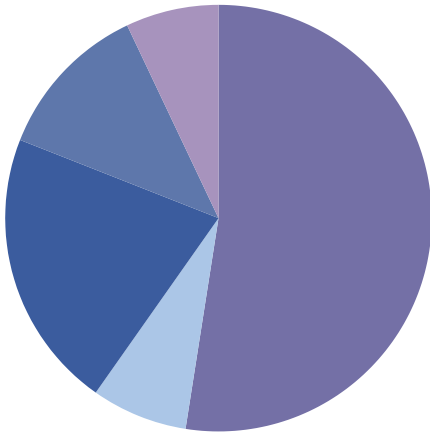
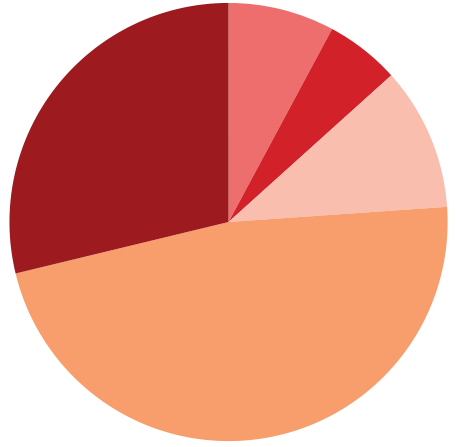
Brian Stokes Mitchell performs at *The Ford's Theatre Annual Gala*, June 9, 2024, in Washington, D.C. Photo by Carol Rosegg.

Financial Snapshot

REVENUE

total = \$15,574,601

- Mainstage Ticket Sales \$4,481,563
- Historic Site Visit Income \$1,220,914
- Contributed Income \$7,371,331
- Endowment Income \$854,570
- Other Income \$1,646,223



EXPENSES

total = \$15,570,700

- Programming \$8,170,243
- Marketing \$1,135,264
- Administration \$3,302,487
- Occupancy \$1,097,389
- Fundraising and Gala \$1,865,317



Ford's Theatre Society has received Charity Navigator's 4-star ranking for fiscal sustainability.



Ford's Theatre Society has earned a Candid Gold Seal of Transparency.

Ford's Theatre Society

Board of Trustees 2023-2024

OFFICERS

Chairman

Phebe N. Novakovic

Vice Chairman

David H. Long

Vice Chairman

Heather Podesta

Treasurer

B. J. Agugliaro

Secretary

Ray Dempsey, Jr.

Chairman Emeritus

Eric A. Spiegel

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Brian C. Anderson

Lawrence Duncan III

James W. Dyer

Marlene A. Malek

Charles Segars

Iris Weinsall

Caroline McDonald Aderholt

Rima Al-Sabah

Eva Al-Thani

Lisa Arpey

Steven G. Barry

Andy Blocker

Abigail P. Blunt

Joyce M. Brayboy

Cynthia J. Brinkley

Ian Cameron

Hon. Elaine L. Chao

Giani Clarkson‡

Dianne Cleaver

Art Collins

Sandy Cornyn

Kasey A. Crowley

Hon. Deborah I. Dingell

Gloria Story Dittus

Theresa M. Fariello

Karyn M. Frist

Bruce A. Gates

Andy Green

Chrissy Hagerty

Michael R. Hemmerich

Susan Hess

Robin Hickenlooper

Elizabeth Jackson Hodges

Hon. Sven Erik Holmes

Ghada Raslan Irani

Frank F. Islam

Hon. Alphonso Jackson

Norman Jemal

Elizabeth Baker Keffer

Ritu Ahuja Khanna

Evan A. Knisely

Kent Knutson

Marc S. Lampkin

Frances R. Lindner

Susan J. Blumenthal Markey, M.D.

Judy McCarthy

Hon. William F. McSweeney *

Catherine Merrill

Ayesha K. Molino

Noémi K. Neidorff

Kelley Paul

Ronald O. Perelman

Vicki Risch

Hon. Frederick J. Ryan, Jr.

Betty Ann Tanner

Louise Taper

Hon. Michael R. Turner

Craig Wallace‡

‡ *Ex officio Trustee*

*Life Trustee