



ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

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In Memoriam

**ANW 2024-25
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MISSION WHAT DO WE DO?

A Noise Within produces classic theatre as an essential means to enrich our community by embracing universal human experiences, expanding personal awareness, and challenging individual perspectives. Our company of resident and guest artists immerse student and general audiences in timeless, epic stories in an intimate setting.

VISION WHAT ARE OUR IDEALS?

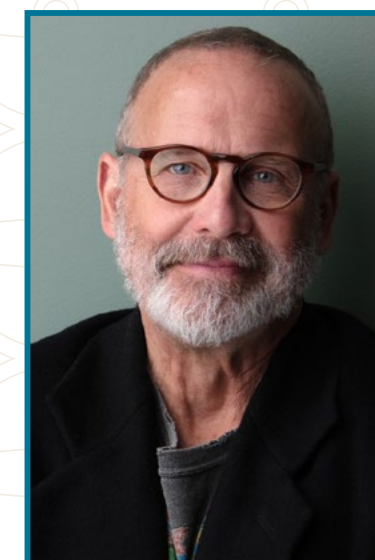
Our most successful art asks our community to question beliefs, focus on relationships, and develop self-awareness. Southern California audiences of all ages and backgrounds build community together while engaging with this most visceral and primal of storytelling techniques. ANW's production of classic theatre includes all plays we believe will be part of our cultural legacy. We interpret these stories through the work of a professional resident company—a group of artists whose work is critical to their community—based on the belief that trust among artists, and between artists and audience, can only be built through an honest and continuing dialogue.

VALUES WHAT WILL WE FIERCELY DEFEND?

- Artistic excellence means serving the story with integrity
- Classic theatre is an inclusive endeavor, engaging our broadest community by age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability—all people—with universal stories
- Education means eliciting empathy with disparate viewpoints and deepening our students' personal relationship with great literature
- Our resident artist company builds trust that deepens their ability to interpret the work

**EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND
ANTI-RACISM POLICY**

A Noise Within's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (EDIA) Policy is built around the idea that every aspect of ANW - including our artists, plays, events, education, board, staff, volunteers, and audience—should be reflective of our greater community. We continue to seek out and implement new practices that further these ideals, with the goal that everyone who steps foot in our building should feel like they belong at A Noise Within.



DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for making Season 33 our biggest ever—breaking more box office records than any other season in our history.

Throughout the season we explored the theme “Balancing Act,” encountering worlds that were askew, in one way or another. We kicked off the season with Lydia R. Diamond's stunning adaptation of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, which brought in more than double the number of patrons we initially anticipated. Then, we embarked on a mischievous night in the forest with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which brought rich new colors and sounds to this familiar story. Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* finally arrived on our stage, and it was sold out for the majority of our performances. We mounted another moving installment of August Wilson's American Century Cycle with *King Hedley II*, which played to great acclaim. George Bernard Shaw's gleeful romp *Misalliance* ended the season on a hilarious high note.

Now in our 34th season, we are grateful that our subscriber base remains loyal as ever and has grown every year. Our audiences are more diverse than ever, and retain a curious appetite for the classic stories and modern magic that A Noise Within is known for.

We couldn't be any more grateful for our incredible community. Thank you for making A Noise Within your theatrical home.

Warmly,
Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliott
PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

Cover photo: *The Bluest Eye*. Photo by Craig Schwartz. Left margin photo by Christopher Alvarez. Background pattern artwork by Dennis S. Juett & Associates Inc. Center photo of Julia Rodriguez-Elliott and Geoff Elliott by Daniel Reichert. Right margin Joanna A. Jones, Geoff Elliott, Kasey Mahaffy in *Sweeney Todd*. Photo by Craig Schwartz.



AWARDS
2023-24 Season

Stage Scene LA “Scenie Award”
WINNER:
**BEST LARGER
THEATER**

BOB BARTH/WFMU
WINNER:
**2023-24 PERFECT
SEASON AWARD**



BALANCING ACT

A NOISE WITHIN'S
2023-24 THEATRE SEASON

6 fully staged productions
78 actors onstage
30,223 attendees
164 performances

FALL 2023

“UNFLINCHING WISDOM...
summon[s] the essence of the novel
to powerful life onstage.”
—Charles McNulty, *Los Angeles Times*

The Bluest Eye

FROM THE BOOK BY Toni Morrison
ADAPTED BY Lydia R. Diamond
DIRECTED BY Andi Chapman

August 27–September 24, 2023

“WOW! ...Nobody does William
Shakespeare with more originality
and flair than A Noise Within.”
—Steven Stanley, *Stage Scene LA*

A Midsummer Night’s Dream

BY William Shakespeare
DIRECTED BY Julia Rodriguez-Elliott & Geoff Elliott
October 8–November 12, 2023

“Only a die-hard humbug could remain
unmoved by so charming a yuletide treat.”
—David C. Nichols, *Los Angeles Times*
Charles Dickens’

A Christmas Carol

ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY Geoff Elliott
DIRECTED BY Geoff Elliott & Julia Rodriguez-Elliott
December 1–24, 2023

SPRING 2024

“INCREDIBLE ...There are a lot of good
productions of *Sweeney Todd*, I’ve not seen
one better... done in an extraordinary way
that you will not forget.”
—Bob Barth, *WFMU radio*

Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY Stephen Sondheim
BOOK BY Hugh Wheeler
FROM AN ADAPTATION BY Christopher Bond

February 11–March 17, 2024

“[A] MASTER CLASS IN ACTING ...crisp and
clear-eyed direction... beautifully realized.”
—Charles McNulty, *Los Angeles Times*

August Wilson’s

King Hedley II

DIRECTED BY Gregg T. Daniel
March 31–April 28, 2024

“SHINES ...entertaining, humorous, satirical,
and clever... a must-see production and
one of A Noise Within’s best.”
—Elaine Mura, *Splash Magazines*

Misalliance

BY George Bernard Shaw
DIRECTED BY Guillermo Cienfuegos
May 12 – June 9, 2024

EDUCATION IMPACT



\$77,870 IN STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS



95 SCHOOLS FROM 32 SCHOOL DISTRICTS



38 STUDENT MATINEES

Education puts A Noise Within's mission into action by bridging the gap between stage and classroom,

presenting students and educators from across Southern California with classic theatre and modern magic. In a typical year, ANW enriches the lives of 18,000 students both at the theatre and out in the community.

Our Student Matinee program allows students to experience our productions at a significantly reduced cost, enhanced by post-show discussions with the actors and our free standards-aligned academic study guides. We extend our reach into the community through in-school workshops and residency programs, supporting teachers and providing essential arts education where it's needed most. As always, our program served a majority low-income schools.

A Noise Within allows students the chance to **expand their community and broaden their appreciation for the arts** in Southern California.

Teacher at South Pasadena Middle School

I want to see more theatre plays!

12th grader at Santa Monica High School



OUR COMMITMENT

3 RESIDENCIES: Blue 13 Dance Company | Lower Depth Theatre | TheaterWorkers Project

Noise Now is an enhanced commitment to being of service to all audiences, an opportunity to expand our family by engaging with our neighboring communities and peer organizations, and an initiative for building stronger relationships as we demonstrate our eagerness to listen well and respond courageously. Through these collaborative interdisciplinary partnerships, we strive to celebrate underrepresented populations, communities of color, young people, and all others not equitably represented in the theatre. Our stages have always been a space for healing, and connecting over universal human stories has never been more necessary.

FEATURED PARTNERS:

TURNING POINTS

Presented by TheatreWorkers Project

Turning Points was created through a collaboration with The Francisco Homes and funded in part by the California Arts Council, a state agency.

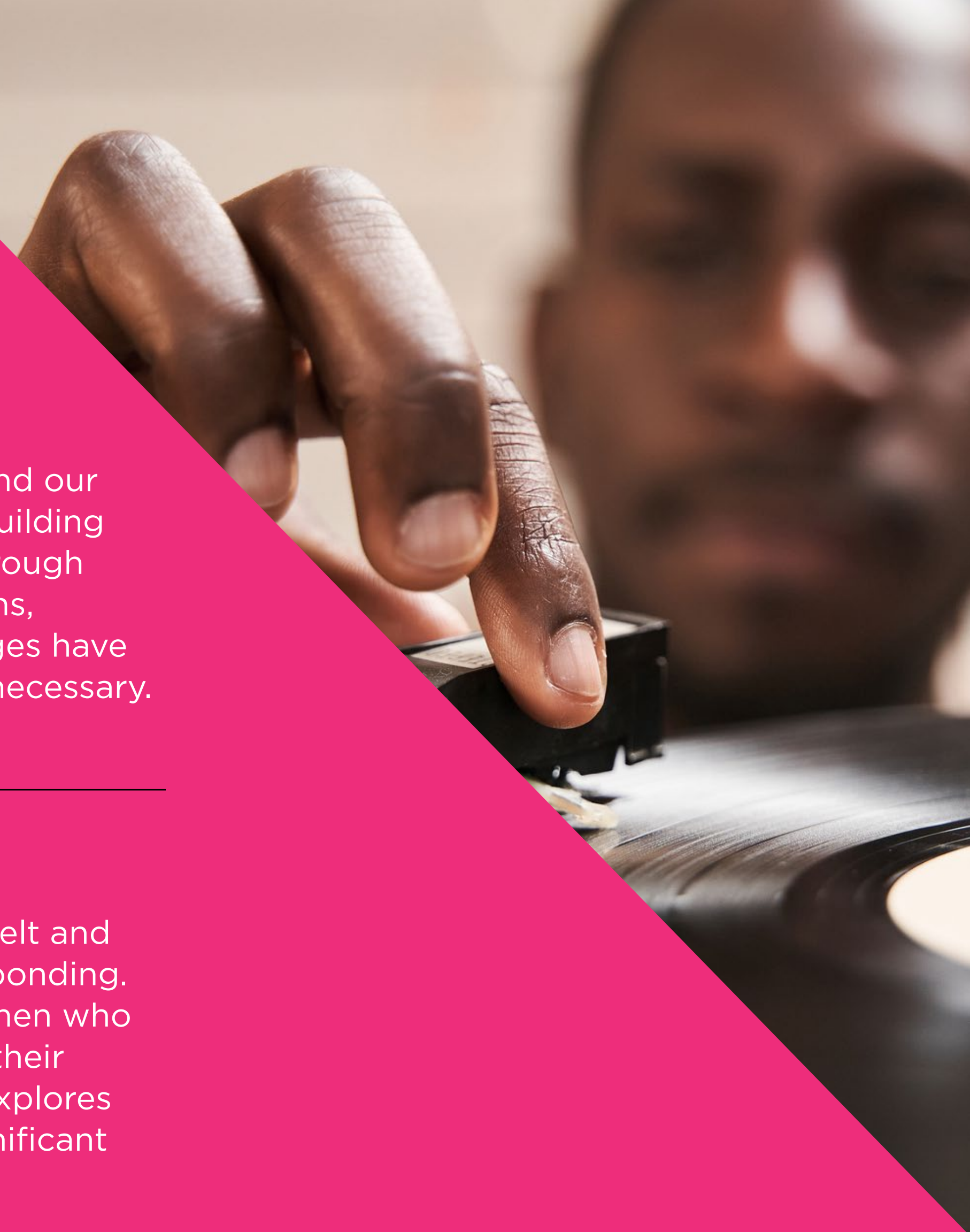
TheatreWorkers Project is fiscally sponsored by Ensemble Studio Theatre/LA.

In this production of Turning Points, six men on parole from serving life sentences express the genesis and impact of their turning points through poetry and prose. During the Second Act discussion that follows the staged reading, the audience will have an opportunity to reflect on and examine their turning points and dialogue with the cast and creative team.

HYMN

Presented by Lower Depth Theatre

Lolita Chakrabarti's Hymn is a heartfelt and empathetic tale of family and male bonding. This captivating story of two black men who form an unbreakable bond through their journey of self-discovery and grief explores their platonic friendship and the significant role of music in their lives.



EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION, AND ANTI-RACISM

ANW is committed to the lifelong work of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Anti-Racism (EDIA), which includes an ongoing analysis of how we work, what we put onstage, and the way audiences experience our theatre. Over the past few seasons, we've taken several steps towards advancing these core institutional priorities. Our 2023-24 EDIA initiatives included:

EDIA Assistant Designer Program (new for 2023-24)-Funded by the EDIA committee's allocated funds, this program launched in 2023-24 season, with nine BIPOC apprentices given the opportunity to work alongside our professional creative team members.

EDIA Staff Training (focus dealt with values and vision, and ways of de-escalating difficult situations, plus creating a "code of conduct"/"An Invitation to Community" shared between staff, patrons, and all members of ANW). See more below.

Black Out Nights (an event continuation, launched in 2022)-Black Out Night is a purposeful environment in which an audience, self-identifying as Black, can come together and experience a performance in community. A reception follows the performance, providing an opportunity for the audience to discuss their experiences and socialize.

DIVERSITY IN STAFF

Representation of Asian, Black, and Hispanic/Latiné actors have trended towards more equitable representation in recent years, and no sector at ANW has more than 50% of people who identify as Caucasian, and most sectors hover around 30% Caucasian representation.

DIVERSITY IN PRODUCTIONS

With the notable exception of designers, the snapshot of the 2023-24 season indicates a near-racial parity in one category (stage managers), or even a minority majority (actors and directors), as listed below.

Actors & Understudies: 71 BIPOC, 41 Non-BIPOC

Directors: 9 BIPOC, 1 Non-BIPOC

Stage Managers: 5 BIPOC, 7 Non-BIPOC

Designers: 15 BIPOC, 27 Non-BIPOC

Assistant Designers/Apprentices: 9 BIPOC

Board of Directors (19 members):

53% Women and 47% Men
39% self-identify as BIPOC

BIPOC Audience Demographic Snapshot

The Bluest Eye 30.3%
A Midsummer Night's Dream 21.6%
A Christmas Carol 27.6%
Sweeney Todd 23.8%
King Hedley II 27.9%
Misalliance 19.1%

INVITATION TO COMMUNITY

A Noise Within extends an invitation to join our community with a set of principles that emphasize respect, empathy, clear communication, deep listening, openness to learning, and the recognition of multiple truths and experiences. By adhering to these principles, individuals contribute to the creation of a welcoming and inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and understood.

For a more comprehensive look at our EDIA approach at ANW, please visit

anoisewithin.org/equity-diversity-inclusion-at-anw/





DINNER ON STAGE 2024

On May 21st, 109 of our friends, patrons and Resident Artists joined us for our Dinner on Stage Gala celebrating our 32nd season. We broke another record this year and raised \$272,100 for our Education Programs!

Honorees for the evening were long time friends Rick & Sharon Ellingsen who have been donors/Board members/volunteers/angels for decades. We also honored Teachers of the Year Nikysha Gilliam and Hovsep (Bob) Hovannesian who have brought thousands of students to A Noise Within over the years.

The cast of Misalliance performed scenes from the play on the stage while seated guests cheered. Kasey Mahaffy donned his "Puck" costume, using his magic to will the crowd into raising their paddles in record breaking numbers supporting Student Matinees, Workshops, Teaching Artists and Buses for the program. Cassandra Marie Murphy surprised the crowd with a performance from Sweeney Todd. Onil Chibas catered the event and left everyone's bellies happy.

It was a night of entertainment and laughter with superb food & drink. We hope that you can all join us in May 2025!



SPECIAL THANKS TO THE INCROWD

A Noise Within gratefully acknowledges the generosity of our donors. The following represents donors of \$250 or more between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. *Indicates ProducerPass holders who have generously paid double the cost of their season pass to support the full cost of theatre operations.

SEASON SPONSOR (\$50,000+)

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PRODUCING SPONSOR (\$30,000 TO \$49,999)

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SPONSOR (\$15,000 TO \$29,999)

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PLAYWRIGHT CIRCLE (\$2,500 TO \$4,999)

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Leilani Jones Wilmore, In Memory of Josephine Flanders
David & Julia Zuckerman

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Donna Tucker*
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Alex Wang

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Thank you to the following institutions who support A Noise Within's operations, education, artistic development, and other special projects. The following represents institutional donors of \$500 or more between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. If you are interested in the benefits of institutional giving or sponsorship, please contact Jim Miller at jmiller@anoisewithin.org or 626.356.3113.

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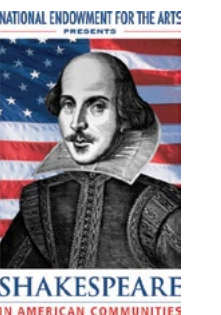
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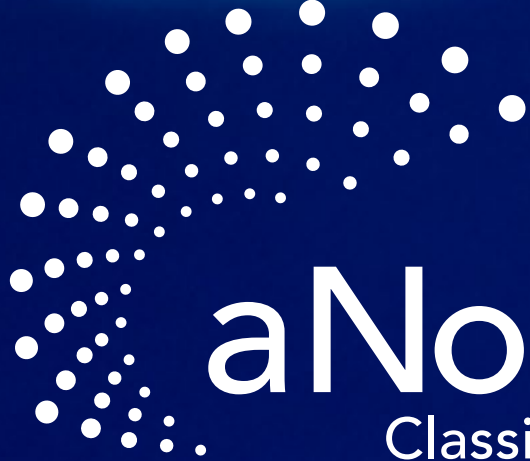
Thank you for all of your support of A NOISE WITHIN. We would not be here without you! Only 1/3rd of our revenue came from ticket sales during the 23/24 season, so your donations enabled us to share our work with the community and with students.

We are grateful for your continued support. Please consider supporting our live professional theatre productions.

[CLICK HERE TO DONATE](#)





 aNoiseWithin
Classic Theatre, Modern Magic



Kasey Mahaffy in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Craig Schwartz.