

OUR MISSION



FROM THE PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



I am pleased to present to you our Annual Report for Season 27, which covers the period from July 1, 2017 - June 30, 2018.

While there are many highlights to share with you, I am most proud of the conversations sparked by this year's productions. As I stand in the lobby after each show, I hear the laughter, joy, tears, debates, and discussions among our audience members, and I am overjoyed. For me, it is a potent

reminder each day of the power of theatre to build community and transform lives.

I want to thank all of the talented artists, designers, directors, technicians, and musicians who have shared their gifts with our audiences to bring these stories to life. I also want to express my deep appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the inspiring volunteers on our SpeakEasy Boards.

And finally, I want to thank you, SpeakEasy's amazing family of donors and subscribers, for your belief in our mission. Your generosity and participation have made our work possible, and I hope you will continue to support our efforts to create meaningful conversation throughout the Greater Boston community.

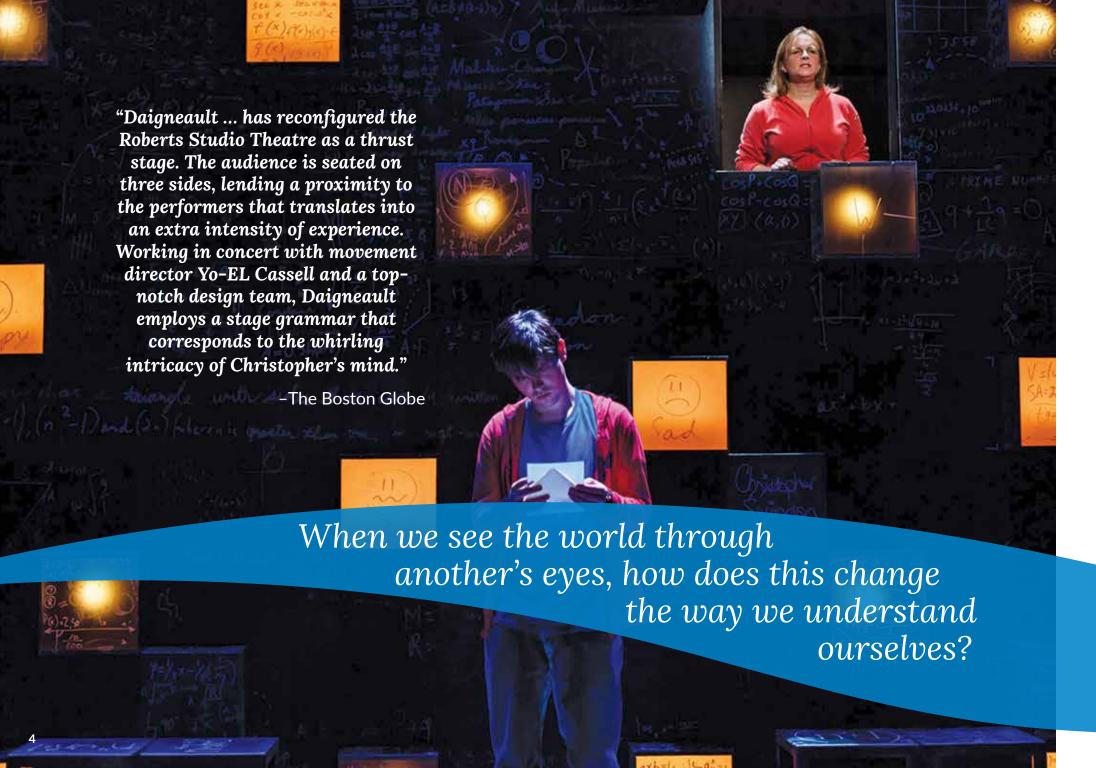
I look forward to seeing you at the theater!

With gratitude,

Paul Daigneault

Producing Artistic Director

All photos courtesy of Nile Scott Studios except page 9 and back cover (top left), Maggie Hall; page 10 courtesy of artists; page 14, courtesy of artists; page 17-19, Justin Saglio.



The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

OCTOBER 20 - NOVEMBER 25, 2017

BASED ON THE NOVEL BY Mark Haddon

ADAPTED BY Simon Stephens

DIRECTED BY Paul Daigneault

MOVEMENT DIRECTION BY Yo-EL Cassel

While the Tony Award-winning Broadway version of *Curious Incident* was known for its utilization of technology and special effects, SpeakEasy's staging of the play used the intimacy of the Roberts Studio Theatre to evoke intense emotions and heartfelt sympathy for the main character, Christopher Boone. The piece takes us inside the mind of a young man with an unnamed sensory disorder, allowing the audience to experience the world through his eyes. As he tries to solve the mystery of the murder of his neighbor's dog, he uncovers some family secrets that turn his world upside down and lead him on a life-changing journey. The audience experiences this story not only from Christopher's perspective, but also from the perspectives of those who love him – his mother, his father, and his teacher. The result is a deeply moving and heartfelt experience about the power of love in all its forms. SpeakEasy's production played to nearly sold out houses through most of the run, making it one of the best-selling shows in the history of the company.



PROVIDING ACCESS FOR SCHOOLS Student Matinee Program

Each season, SpeakEasy offers exclusive performances for middle and high school students to see shows with subjects uniquely relevant to their everyday lives. In Season 27, we hosted 390 students from ten schools for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* and another 310 students from four schools for *Allegiance*. Most of the students came from the Boston Public Schools with students also coming from various suburbs around Boston. SpeakEasy provided a curriculum packet for teachers to prepare the students ahead of time; and after each performance students were able to talk with the actors and ask questions. More than half of the students reported that they had never experienced live theatre before!

"One of my students who attended has severe autism, and according to the professionals that he works with, should be in a life skills program. His parents chose to send him to our public school. He is new to our school this year and is still making connections. On the bus ride to the theater, he sat alone. On the ride back, kids were empathizing with him, sitting with him, trying to get to know him.

It was a beautiful moment."

 Noah Dawson, Drama Director and Special Education Instructor, The Sizer School



LAUNCHING THE NEXT GENERATION Emerging Artists Program

At SpeakEasy, we make it a priority to cultivate the next generation of theatre artists and give them the opportunities they need to develop their potential. We intentionally hire talented young actors for many of our productions to work alongside experienced actors, designers, directors, and stage managers. They are given the freedom to learn and to grow on the job, but with the support of some of the most talented artists in Boston. This past year, of the 64 actors, 40 designers, and 33 crew involved in producing our shows, 17 actors, 10 designers, and 15 crew members were just starting out in their professional careers.

"I always felt seen, respected, supported, and valued by the company. It always felt like the company was really supporting the production and all of the actors involved. Everyone was really professional and wanted to produce high quality work, but also valued creating a safe environment for folks."

- Artist from the cast of Men on Boats

Men on Boats

SEPTEMBER 8 - OCTOBER 7, 2017

BY Jaclyn Backhaus

DIRECTED BY Dawn M. Simmons

SpeakEasy's production of *Men On Boats* felt like an Indiana Jones adventure live on stage – complete with river rapids, mountain hikes, waterfalls, caves, campfires, and snakes! The play tells the true story of an 1869 expedition led by Major John Wesley Powell to chart the Colorado River and the Grand Canyon for the U.S. government. But what makes the play particularly interesting is that all of the characters, who are based on cis-gender, white male historical figures, are portrayed by "racially diverse actors who are female-identifying, trans-identifying, gender-fluid, and/or non-gender-conforming" – a mandated stipulation from the playwright, Jaclyn Backhaus. According to Ms. Backhaus, "It's interesting for me to take that idea of male conquest, give it to someone who usually doesn't have that right, and put that into the roles themselves. It begs the question of what histories we are lacking." *Men On Boats* offered an opportunity for a diverse population of artists, including many from underrepresented populations, to give a different perspective on the story of one of the greatest explorations in our country's history.





Every Brilliant Thing

MARCH 2 - 31, 2018

BY Duncan MacMillan with Jonny Donahoe
DIRECTED BY Marianna Bassham

Every Brilliant Thing takes the audience on one person's lifelong search for the everyday things that make life worth living. It is hard to imagine that a play about depression and suicide can be uplifting and heart-warming, but Boston powerhouse Adrianne Krstansky gave such a charming, light-hearted, and moving account of her character's journey that we could not help but feel hope. Staged in the round, this play required unprecedented audience participation – with volunteers reading off items from the list of over 1,000,000 brilliant things and playing the roles of each of the significant characters in her life. While some members of the audience initially found this a bit intimidating, most embraced the opportunity to be a part of the story and were comforted by the supportive community around them. In the weeks leading up to the production, subscribers and donors provided Ms. Krstansky with a "rehearsal audience", offering a valuable service for the production, while also receiving a unique glimpse into what it takes to develop a show. The end result was a beautiful and engaging experience for the community where the wisdom gained from brilliant things helped us identify our darkest fears and work together to find the light.



CREATING CONVERSATION Community Engagement Programs

To more deeply engage our audiences, we hold postshow conversations with the actors every Sunday as well as additional relevant programs depending upon the show. For example, for *Every Brilliant Thing*, we partnered with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) to offer a talkback series on Thursdays with mental health professionals and members of NAMI. We also asked patrons to contribute to a list of "brilliant things" on social media and on the bulletin board in our lobby. These types of activities engage our audience members and help them examine their own connections to the experience.

"In our partnership with Speakeasy
Stage, our goal was to give the
production's audiences a firmer
understanding of what it is like to
have a mental illness and how we
need to break down stigma and
build up empathy and hope.
We also wanted to enrich their
experience of the play by presenting
a person who has lived with mental
illness and a clinician from the
field at the weekly post-play discussions."

- Karen Gromis, Deputy Director, NAMI Mass



TRAINING FUTURE LEADERS Fellowships and Internships

At SpeakEasy, we are committed to helping train the leaders of tomorrow's theatres and arts organizations. We give real work experience to college students and recent graduates to help them advance their careers while benefitting from their energy, talent, and dedication to our mission. In Season 27, we had 14 college interns for arts administration, production, and marketing. Two recent college graduates (pictured above) served as members of the staff – Hanne Larsen as Marketing Fellow and Joe Juknievich as Artistic Fellow. Hanne managed our social media campaigns and helped with planning special events, while Joe worked on casting, curriculum development, and play selection, among other projects.

"One of the most meaningful experiences I had in my fellowship was casting the title role in Shakespeare in Love. Paul was so helpful in teaching me the most efficient process for planning and executing successful casting calls, and together we made it happen! I felt so empowered by his support, and I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to coordinate one of the company's most important creative processes."

- Joe Juknievich, Artistic Fellow

Shakespeare In Love

JANUARY 12 - FEBRUARY 10, 2018

BASED ON THE SCREENPLAY BY Marc Norman & Tom Stoppard
ADAPTED FOR THE STAGE BY Lee Hall

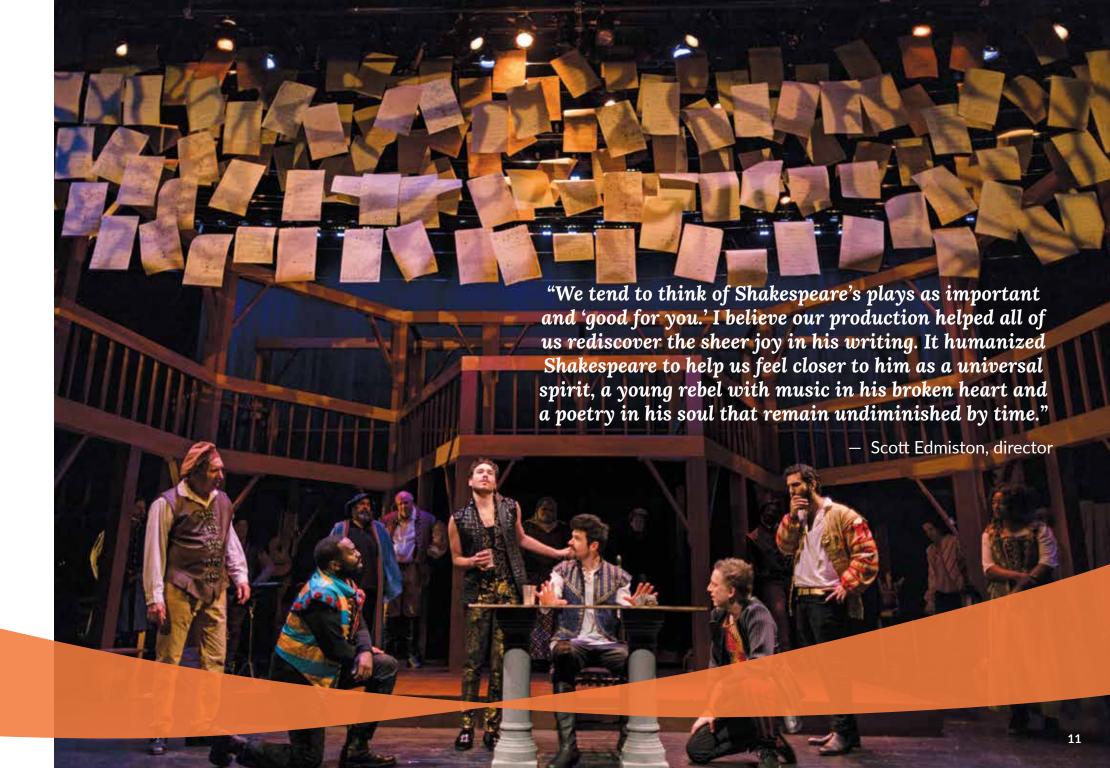
DIRECTED BY Scott Edmiston

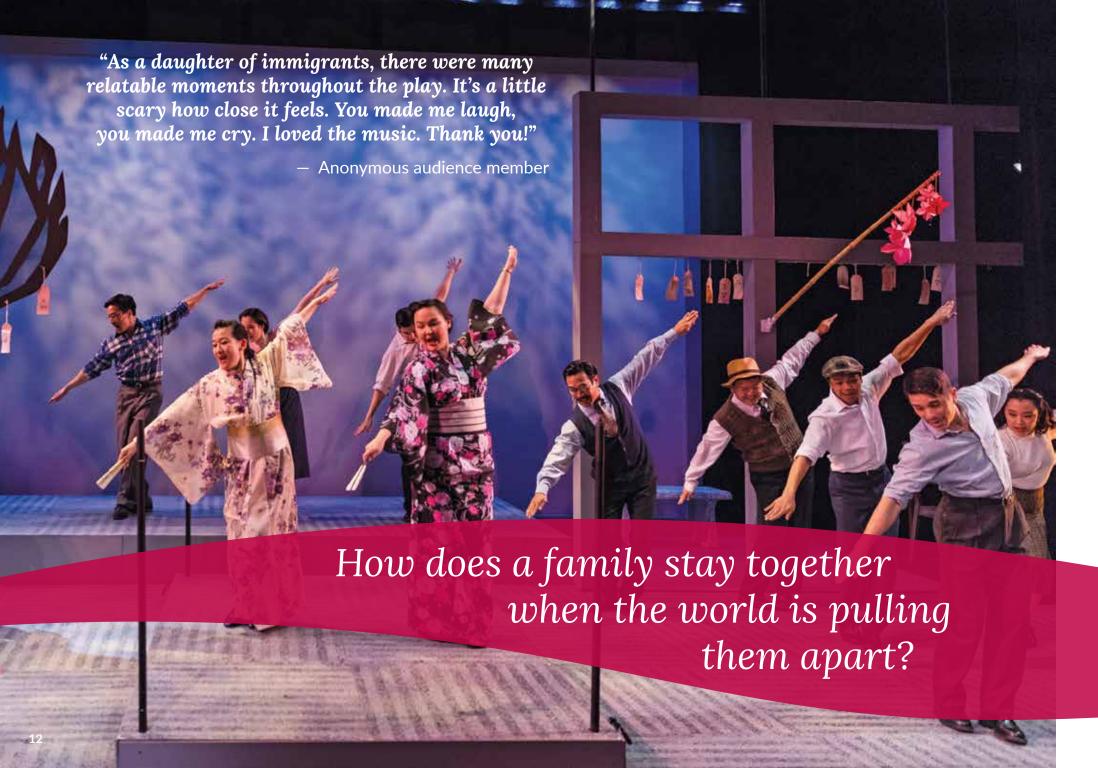
ORIGINAL MUSIC/MUSIC DIRECTION BY David Reiffel

CHOREOGRAPHY/MOVEMENT BY Judith Chaffee

Shakespeare In Love is a glorious celebration of the creative process and the transformative power of theatre. Based on the Academy Award-winning film of the same name, the play tells the story of young Will Shakespeare, who is suffering a severe case of writer's block as the deadline fast approaches to deliver his new play. What follows is a fictional account of what might have inspired Shakespeare to write Romeo and Juliet – featuring star-crossed lovers, raucous characters, fencing mayhem, arch-nemeses, debauchery – and even a dog! A terrific ensemble, led by George Olesky as Shakespeare and Jennifer Ellis as Viola, illustrated how all of the characters in Will's life contributed to his evolution and helped him to discover the artist he was truly meant to be. Even though this story takes place in the Elizabethan era, SpeakEasy's production of Shakespeare in Love transcended time and place, and gave audiences a sense of how a community can inspire the artist to create his best work.

How does a young artist find his inspiration?





Allegiance

MAY 4 - JUNE 2, 2018

BOOK BY Marc Acito, Jay Kuo, and Lorenzo Thione

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY Jay Kuo

DIRECTED BY Paul Daigneault

MUSIC DIRECTED BY Matthew Stern

CHOREOGRAPHED BY Ilyse Robbins

TRADITIONAL JAPANESE CHOREOGRAPHY BY Kendyl Yokoyama

To close the season, SpeakEasy presented the East Coast Regional Premiere of *Allegiance*, a musical that explores a little discussed part of our history – the Japanese internment of World War II. Inspired by the true childhood experience of TV/film actor and social media icon George Takei (Mr. Sulu on *Star Trek*), *Allegiance* tells the story of the Kimura family, whose lives are upended when they and 120,000 other Japanese-Americans are forced to leave their homes following the events at Pearl Harbor. Each member of the family is required to examine their own loyalties – to family, to country, to their fellow Japanese Americans – and take a stand. Starkly relevant in our nation's challenging political times, the story gave us an opportunity to study first-hand how people are affected by racial profiling, how families can be torn apart, and how drastically different the definitions of patriotism can be. SpeakEasy's intimate production of *Allegiance* engaged new communities throughout the city and was a testament to the power of the human spirit and its ability to find hope, love, and forgiveness.



PROVIDING ACCESS TO ARTISTS

Community Engagement Programs

To engage our community more deeply, we often bring the generative artists for a production to Boston to talk with the audience about their work. For example, we were thrilled to be able to host *Star Trek* legend George Takei during the run of *Allegiance*. Mr. Takei and Janet Wu, Emmy-winning reporter and Co-Host of WCVB's *On the Record*, had a public conversation at the Boston Public Library about his time in an internment camp as a young boy, his family's story, and how it became the basis for the musical *Allegiance*. This sold-out event was co-sponsored by our friends at the Boston Asian American Film Festival.

"Our partnership with SpeakEasy Stage provided an opportunity to join two great missions in advancing diverse voices in the arts, introducing each of our constituents to each others' work. We are thrilled that this production of Allegiance has engaged the Boston audience with this important American story."

- Susan Chinsen, Executive Director of the Boston Asian American Film Festival



Ole White Sugah Daddv

By Obehi Janice Thursday, June 19, 2018 This play tells the story of Lynn, a

Dorchester native who is a rising

star in the startup industries of Boston and Cambridge.

"Have you ever been in a city that you love but you're trying to leave at the same time?"



Diaspora By Phaedra Michelle Scott Thursday, June 8, 2018 This play explores the world of Sunny, a writer on the edge of

success, whose life is shaken

when she discovers from where she came.

"I hope that future generations can read this. And understand that there's a lot to this history that is unknown. Or is fabricated. Not on purpose. That's just how family history is passed down."



Hot Dog Christmas By Ethan Warren

Thursday, June 7, 2018 This play follows cousins Joey and Grace, longtime Fenway Park employees who believe their daily

superstitious rituals influence the fate of the Boston Red Sox, as they consider adding a new employee to their closely-guarded circle.

> "Why does nobody ever believe the simplest things? There's cause, and there's effect. What we do impacts what happens in there, and that impacts Boston, and that impacts the world."

The Boston Project

In the third season of The Boston Project, SpeakEasy chose two new plays for development from among 45 applicants – Hot Dog Christmas by Ethan Warren and Diaspora by Phaedra Michelle Scott. Working with SpeakEasy artistic staff and professional dramaturgs, the playwrights worked on their plays over the course of the year, culminating in staged readings to full houses in Deane Hall at the Calderwood Pavilion. SpeakEasy also further developed Obehi Janice's play Ole White Sugah Daddy for a second year and will continue to advance this play in the coming year.

A new works initiative, The Boston Project seeks to create more plays for the theatre cannon that explore what it means to be in this city, at this moment, tapping into the full breadth of

experiences and identities that make up life in Boston.

Access Initiatives

At SpeakEasy, we believe that the connection audience members make when attending live theatre, and the conversations that follow, are an essential part of the human experience. We strive to make our productions accessible to the broader community and to make it possible for underserved or disadvantaged populations in the surrounding areas to attend live theatre at an affordable price. Through several partnerships, SpeakEasy offers significant discounts and complimentary tickets to individuals and families with various needs. For example, we donated 125 tickets to the Opening Doors for the Arts program, which serves low income members of the mental health recovery community, and distributed 235 tickets through the local Huntington Community Membership Initiative. We also donated 272 tickets to various nonprofits for their fundraisers and events. And finally, seniors, students, and artists are offered more affordable prices to encourage their participation.





MAKING A SAFE SPACE Sensory-Friendly Performance

Working with Rhoda Bernard from the Berklee Institute for Arts Education and Special Needs, SpeakEasy designed its first-ever Sensory-Friendly performance for The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time so that people with sensitivity issues and/or on the autism spectrum could experience this uniquely relevant show. More than 80 individuals and their families attended this special production, which included adaptations such as adjusted sound and lighting cues, raised house lights, fidget materials, and the ability to move around the theater. Patrons could also view a "social story" video posted on-line which gave them a preview of what to expect when they arrived at the theater. It was a terrific experience for both audience and the actors.

> "After this performance, one young man who self-identified as autistic approached me. When I asked if he enjoyed his time, he told me it was 'the best day of [his] life so far."

> > - Eliott Purcell, actor (Christopher Boone)

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We are deeply grateful to our SpeakEasy donors for their contributions to our Annual Fund and special events throughout the year. Their gifts make it possible for us to continue pursuing our mission, and we sincerely appreciate this generous community.

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Thomas Derrah Emerging Artists Fund to directly David Van Stone support the hiring of new talent. Tommy believed in Paula Vassallo Robert C. Volante giving young artists opportunities to discover their Steve Vorenberg Donna Wade Brian Wagner & Tim Carlson

potential, and he was a tremendous mentor and teacher to artists on our stage. This fund ensures Karen Wallace that Tommy's vibrant and influential legacy will live Michael Wartofsky & Imtiyaz Hussein on for years to come. Alex Washington

> In this inaugural year of the fund, 106 donors contributed \$20,597 in Tommy's memory. In May, SpeakEasy named its first Thomas Derrah Emerging Artist, Allegiance's Kendyl Yokoyama, a Presidential Scholar at The Boston Conservatory at Berklee.

At the Spring Gala on April 8, 2018, John Kuntz accepted

the Mayor Thomas M. Menino Memorial Award for

husband, Tommy Derrah, Pictured L-R: Alex Baker,

Paul Daigneault, John Kuntz, and Karen MacDonald.

In Memory of Thomas Derrah

Shortly after his death, SpeakEasy established the

On October 5, 2017, SpeakEasy

lost a dear friend and artist,

Thomas Derrah. Tommy was

a nationally acclaimed actor,

director, and educator who was

often seen on SpeakEasy's stage.

Inspired Support of the Arts on behalf of his late

"Working with Tommy was a master class in itself. Getting the opportunity to be in a room with him and watch him work - to see how he tackles a scene and works with the material... As a young actor, it was so helpful."

- Ally Dawson, actor

SPEAKEASY LEADERSHIP

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Melissa Langa Erik Ramanathan Nancy Roberts Jim Stiles Ann Teixeira **Barney Weinstein** Clea Winneg

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Dominique D. Burford, Associate Production Manager Evan Turissini, Creative Services Associate Jennifer Morris, Administrative Associate Joe Juknievich, Artistic Fellow Hanne Larsen, Marketing Fellow

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Interns

Curly Glynn

Laura Haas

*Unaudited results as of 10/30/18 SEASON BY THE NUMBERS 153 performances 1.792 subscribers

GFOGRAPHY OF PATRONS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

EARNED INCOME

Subscription Revenue

Total earned revenue

General/Administrative

CONTRIBUTED INCOME

Total contributed income

Change in Net Assets

Foundations and Corporations

Other

EXPENSES

Fundraising

Total Expenses

Operating Deficit

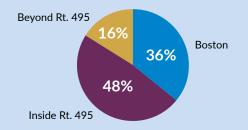
Individual Giving

Special Events

26,682 patrons

Programs

Single Ticket Sales Revenue



For more information on the Annual Report or SpeakEasy's giving programs, contact Cathi lanno, Director of Development, at cathiianno@speakeasystage.com or 617-482-3279.

*These lists recognize donations given to the Annual Fund as well as Event Sponsorships from July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018,

19

\$406,969

\$561,288

\$968,257

\$1.072.169

\$331,079

\$267,552

\$1,670,800

(\$ 702,543)

\$296,102

\$155,840

\$258,385

\$710,327

1.078 individual donors

\$7,784

\$181

