



# ANNUAL REPORT

2022-2023



**THE NASHVILLE  
SHAKESPEARE  
FESTIVAL**

# MISSION

The mission of the Nashville Shakespeare Festival is to educate and entertain the Mid-South community through professional theatrical experiences.

The Festival enriches and unifies our community with bold, innovative and relevant productions along with empowering, participatory educational programs, setting the community standard of excellence in educational outreach and performances of Shakespeare's plays.



# HISTORY OF THE NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL



In 1988, a group of local actors led by Chambers Stevens produced the first free-of-charge Shakespeare in the Park production of *As You Like It* in Centennial Park. Inspired by strong support from the community for the first production, the founders followed up with a second free production in the Park, *Pericles* in 1989, and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival was born. Local attorney and actor Donald Capparella assisted those founders (who included longtime company member Jill Jackson), and when Stevens left Nashville after *Pericles*, Capparella was joined by Denice Hicks among many others to create the first professional production of Shakespeare in the Park, *The Merry Wives of*

*Windsor* in 1990. During its thirty-five year history, the Festival has grown into one of the region's leading professional theatres, which is designed to be accessible to people from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Since 1988, over 366,000 Middle Tennesseans have attended, and admission has remained free, with donations welcomed for any who choose to support the Festival.

In 1992, in response to the need for an arts-in-education program in the Metropolitan Nashville Public Schools, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival developed its educational outreach program. Abridged productions toured to middle and high schools throughout the state as well as regional colleges and universities. Through the years, the Festival has become a trusted resource for schools by providing enriching in-classroom workshops and creative opportunities for students. Over 226,000 students – many of whom had never experienced live theatre before – have been introduced to Shakespeare through the Festival's interactive workshops and energetic performances.

In 2008, The Nashville Shakespeare Festival established its annual Winter Shakespeare production. The winter production allowed The Festival to expand its repertoire to include plays that benefit from a more intimate indoor venue and to provide both public performances and daytime school performances. The NSF has been awarded grants to give children from under-resourced schools the opportunity to experience these productions free of charge. Following the production, they enjoy a Q&A session with the actors and directors. Shakespeare Allowed!, offered in partnership with the Nashville Public Library, is now in its 15th year. This event brings together anyone who wishes to participate in reading Shakespeare's entire canon aloud. Over 3,900 have participated in these public readings that take place the first Saturday each month. Shakespeare Allowed! is also offered as a weekly class at the Room in the Inn, serving people experiencing homelessness.

# 2022-2023 AWARDS AND HONORS



## NASHVILLE SCENE - BEST OF NASHVILLE

Best Modern Twist on a Classic Comedy, Writer's Choice; Best Theater Company (Local), Third Place

## NASHVILLE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Largest Performing Arts Organizations in Nashville, Sixth Place

## HELLENIC INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL DIPLOMACY - USA

Daughter of the Muses Award - Executive Artistic Director Denice Hicks

# LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST WINTER SHAKESPEARE 2023

*Love's Labor's Lost* by William Shakespeare, a co-production between Belmont University's College of Music & Performing Arts and the Nashville Shakespeare Festival, was performed February 16 -26, 2023 at Belmont University's Troutt Theater.

The *Love Labor's Lost's* cast included two professional actors, Dan Kassis and Mary D. Cheeks, who worked alongside emerging artists from Belmont University's College of Music & Performing Arts. The co-production allowed for theatre students to learn from and work with professionals, providing them with valuable experience for their college career and beyond. Dr. Jane Duncan, Nashville Shakespeare Festival Board Member and Associate Dean of Belmont University's College of Music & Performing Arts, said, "We are thrilled to strengthen our partnership with the Nashville Shakespeare Festival by co-producing this production with them. We have so enjoyed hosting the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's productions every winter in the Troutt Theater, however this new format provides an incredible hands-on learning experience for our theatre students."

*Love's Labor's Lost* was the Nashville Shakespeare Festival's return from a three-year hiatus from in-person Winter Shakespeare programming due to COVID-19 restrictions. The production of served 1,062 students and teachers during daytime matinee performances, as well as an additional 1,586 theatergoers during public performances.





# MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING SUMMER SHAKESPEARE 2023

**Middle Tennessee audiences made “*Much Ado*” about our 35th annual summer presentation**

Summer Shakespeare 2023 was a rousing success that excited and invigorated audiences across the mid-state with 21 free-to-attend performances between August 31 - October 1, 2023. With an attendance of over 7,000 people, *Much Ado About Nothing* saw the strongest audience turnout for Summer Shakespeare since returning from the pandemic hiatus in 2020. Set in 1973 Nashville, against the backdrop of the women’s liberation movement and soldiers returning from the Vietnam War, the show prompted attendees to dance in the aisles to the rock and soul grooves of Stevie Wonder,

Steely Dan, the O’Jays, Dr. John, Marvin Gaye, and more, all while pairs of young lovers hurled insults and pledged vows.

The musically-infused retelling of Shakespeare’s popular romantic-comedy connected with theatre-goers from throughout the state and even across the nation. While the vast majority of viewers were the intended local audience of Middle Tennesseans, surveys and donor data indicate that patrons also hailed from 20 different states, including as far away as Florida, California, New York, and Minnesota.

Summer Shakespeare truly felt like a festival with an outstanding line-up of artists for our pre-show concert series, informative discussions during our *Insight* pre-show lecture series, a cavalcade of food trucks and vendor partners, and special collaboration with local brewery Yazoo on *Shake’s Beer Lager*!

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING CONTINUED:

- *Much Ado About Nothing* provided weeks of artistic employment for 10 professional actors, 4 professional musicians, and over 20 professional designers, technicians, and artists. Summer Shakespeare continues to be a vital, annual contributor to making Nashville a viable city in which practicing artists can live and work.
- Longtime Nashville theatre reviewer Amy Stumpf recognized *Much Ado* with a special Writer's Choice recognition in the *Nashville Scene's* 2023 Best of Nashville Awards, declaring it the "Best Modern Twist on a Classic Comedy."
- Over 20 different local performing artists and groups participated in this year's pre-show concert series, offering an additional dynamic of Nashville artisans to the festival. Early-arriving patrons were able to enjoy a diverse slate of nightly acts ranging from individual singer/songwriters to full 19-piece big-band jazz ensembles, from Americana to Electronic New Wave Rock, and from the Blues to Bluegrass. Acts also included spoken-word poetry, a belly-dancing troupe, aerial acrobatics, and firedancing.
- Singer/Songwriter Larysa Jaye not only doubled as an actor and musical director/band-leader for *Much Ado*, but also contributed an original composition to the score incorporating Shakespeare's own lyrics. This continues an important tradition of NSF recognizing a core priority of our home city in Nashville: the celebration & ongoing creation of music as part of everything we do in Music City USA.

43%

attendance increase  
compared to 2022

15

school and college groups  
attended

\$5.24

Average donation per  
attendee



# 7,063

Total 2023 Summer Shakespeare attendees

# 18.6%

first Shakespeare play they have ever seen live\*



# 15.4%

first time seeing NSF production\*

# 32 STATES

represented by audience members\*

\*as of survey data entered by 11/22/23



# APPRENTICE COMPANY

The Nashville Shakespeare Festival's Apprentice Company (ApCo) is an annual intensive training program with a professional performance opportunity in the Summer Shakespeare production. ApCo is for theater artists ages 13+ and includes Shakespeare technique, movement, text analysis, stage combat, singing, clowning, monologues, audition technique, and more. Every year, the Nashville Shakespeare Festival selects 12-16 emerging artists based upon auditions in the spring.

In 2023, 14 Apprentices received over 70 hours of intensive Shakespearean performance and production training. Apprentices were featured in both leading and supporting roles in *Much Ado About Nothing*, as well as production roles in stage management and dramaturgy.

**For the first time in the program's 25-year history, apprentices were able to participate in ApCo tuition-free. We thank Jason Somerville and Eric Cook for their support as underwriters of our Apprentice Company program!**



# SHAKESPEARE EDUCATION EXPERIENCE TOUR

## A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, ROMEO & JULIET, MACBETH

The Shakespeare Education Experience (SEE) Tour brought a team of five professional actors to across the Middle Tennessee region to perform abridged versions of Shakespeare's most popular and widely-taught works in easy-to-access productions. The tour reached a variety of venues including public and private schools, alternative schools, a juvenile detention center, libraries, Fifty Forward centers, after school programs, event centers, and Room In The Inn. Additionally, performances and workshops for Title I schools and several community institutions were provided completely free of charge. The tour was a resounding success, with tour stops being requested by several first-time community institutions which would typically not be able to offer arts programming of this nature. Our team of performers also served as trained teaching artists and led experience-enriching pre- or post-show workshops to enable those student populations to learn and appreciate even more from their encounter with Shakespeare's work.

3,063

total community members served

8

Title I schools served at no cost

7

Middle TN counties served by SEE Tour programming





# TESTIMONIALS

**“I appreciate you for coming and performing *Romeo and Juliet*. I enjoyed the old English you spoke. It’s inspired me to want to see more classical plays as an adult.”**

- Student, Johnson Learning Center (Title I School)

**“The actors in the production brought the play to life in a way that text, audio, and even film cannot. The students were on the edge of their seats for the entire 90 minutes.”**

- Nashville Area Teacher

**“The students were engaged even more than they expected. My students who have been involved in drama appreciated the high level of acting; my students who are not particularly interested in Shakespeare found the play engaging and funny. They were baffled by the ability for actors to play multiple roles! Thank you for such a high-quality production!”**

- Lindsay Wentworth, Father Ryan High School



# EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

## SHAKESPEARE ALLOWED!

NSF's groundbreaking "Shakespeare Allowed!" program at the Nashville Public Library Main Branch engages the general public monthly, allowing scholars and novices alike to come together and read through Shakespeare's entire canon aloud. Meanwhile, a weekly sister program of "Shakespeare Allowed! at Room in the Inn" utilizes Shakespeare to aid with literacy and critical analysis skills for Middle TN individuals experiencing homelessness.



## NASHVILLE'S SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION

NSF's inaugural Nashville's Shakespeare Competition, in collaboration with the Nashville's Shakespeare project, encouraged middle and high school students to create and submit their own artistic work showcasing what Shakespeare means to them and to the community. Submissions were displayed and performed prior to a free public performance at Belmont's Truitt Theatre in May 2023, at which time winners were also announced and presented with their award.



## DIRECTORS-IN-RESIDENCE

NSF's Directors-In-Residence program offers the opportunity for a school, university, or community center to have a professional theatre artist direct their students in a school production. During the 2022-2023 season, Education Director Katie Bruno directed an abridged version of *Macbeth* for Harpeth Hall's Winterim and assistant directed Franklin Road Academy's production of *The Tempest* (pictured).



# NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

## BY THE NUMBERS

\$729,485

FY23 budget (without in-kind contributions, \$883,963 with in-kind contributions)

13,941

Total amount of community members served through NSF programming

95

Artists and technicians hired by the Nashville Shakespeare Festival (between Jul 2022-June 2023)

41.5%

% BIPOC of all annual/contracted employees (between July 2022-June 2023)

94.7%

artists and technicians hired by NSF that are local to the Greater Nashville area

41%

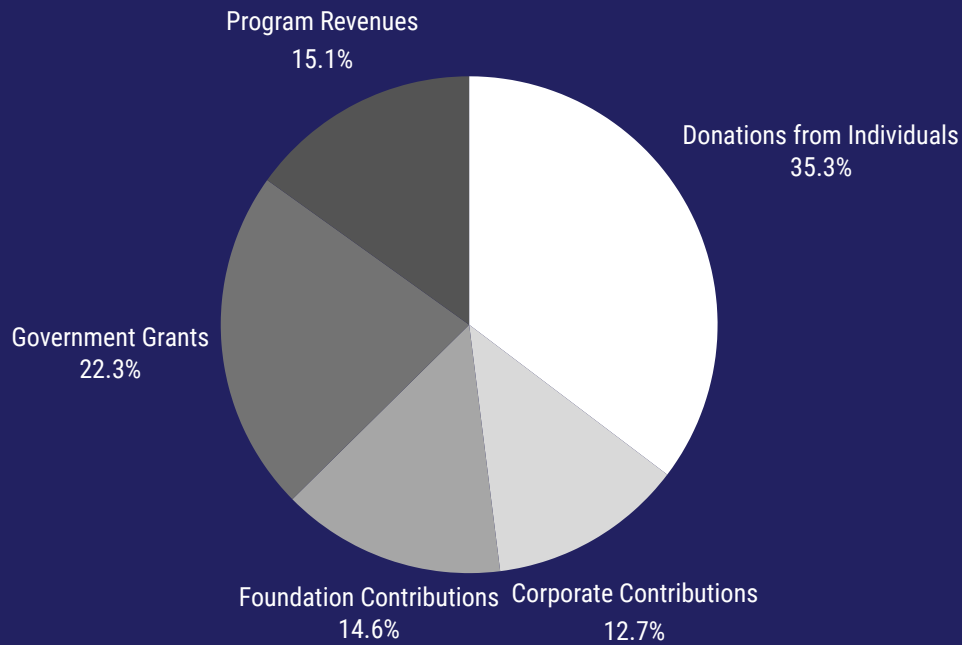
total increase in individual donations including 24% increase in sustainers (monthly donors)



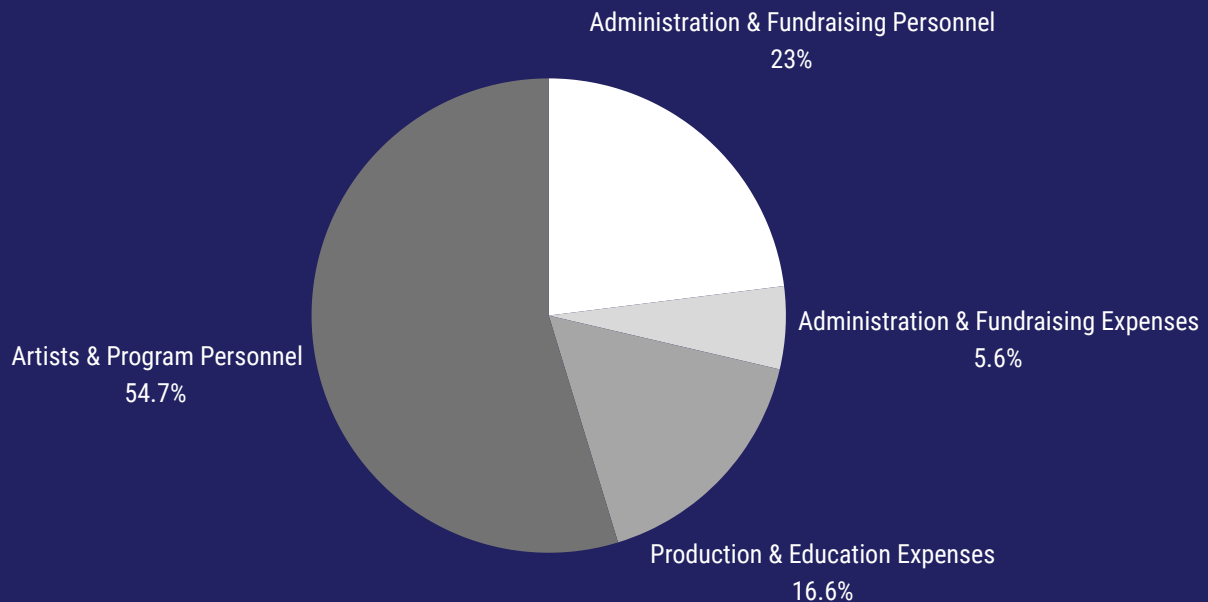
# NASHVILLE SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL

## FINANCIALS

### REVENUES



### EXPENSES



# DONOR LISTING

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

## **\$10,000+**

Anonymous  
Donald Capparella  
Jason Somerville and Eric Cook  
Mary Elizabeth Williams

## **\$5,000 - \$9,999**

Tony and Lynne McAlister  
Cooper Thornton

## **\$2,500 - \$4,999**

Mark and Sheryl Donnell  
Anita Reed  
Anne Roos  
Betsy Turner

## **\$1,000 - \$2,499**

Cathy and Martin Brown  
Lori Carver-Taylor  
Beth and Fred Cate  
Daniel and Stacy Clayton  
Charlotte Covington  
Cynthia Cyrus and Thomas Dowling  
Jane Duncan  
Sherie Edwards  
William Engel  
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Hugh and Jennifer Gray  
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Byron and Beth Smith  
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William and Georganne Syler  
Isabel Tipton-Krispin and Isaac Krispin  
Judy and Steve Turner  
Elizabeth and Kevin Warren  
Amanda and Jeremy White  
Joseph and Beth Woodruff  
David Wyant

## **\$500 - \$999**

Anne Blake and Jud Rogers  
Barbara Brewer  
Dexter and Deborah Brewer  
Janet Bruno  
Dan and Jo Ann Church  
Donald Cusic  
Ann Archer Davis and Kirby Davis, Jr.  
Mike Fernandez  
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Dana Haas  
Deborah E. Haight  
Hank and Mary Hildebrand  
Jill Jackson and Michael Colbert  
Joel Jazmines  
Bryn and Angela Joynes  
Robert and Jayme Marigza-Yeo  
Sean Martin  
Suzanne and Graham Matherne  
Drew McCullough  
Marcia McDonald  
Jessica Miller  
John Noel and Melinda Welton  
Curtis Tipton  
Edward Vanvoorhees and Linda Lundin

## **\$250 - \$499**

Kathi and Edgar Allen  
Ken and Elizabeth Allen  
Adam and Lucija Anderson  
Katharine and Trapper Baum  
Menié and Steve Bell  
Molly Breen  
Vance Broemel  
Mark Buchanan  
Roy Burkhead  
Ruth Cate and Chuck White  
David Curtis and Samantha Morgan-Curtis  
Pat Casey Daley and Bill Steber  
Hilary Dennen  
Char Dennis

# DONOR LISTING

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

## **\$250-\$499 (cont.)**

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Samuel and Jane Stumpf  
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Ava Weiner  
Kristin Whittlesey  
Tori Williams  
Stuart Wiston

## **\$100-\$249**

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Burkley and Newton Allen  
Cathy Altenbern  
Rosalyn H. Anderson  
Kimber Appleton  
Nicole Armstrong  
Chip and Kay Arnold  
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Kathryn Calhoon and David Ettinger  
Diane Caramante  
Edmund Carey  
Pamela Carver  
Kate Cassidy  
Cynthia Chappell



# DONOR LISTING

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

## \$100-\$249 (cont.)

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Samuel Chumbley

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Jerome and Kimberly Reed

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# DONOR LISTING

OCTOBER 1, 2022 - SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

## **\$100-\$249 (cont.)**

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Stephen Taylor  
Elizabeth TeSelle  
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Trent Thomas  
Mary Thorstad  
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Tennessee Arts Commission  
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Yazoo Brewing Company

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**Katie Bruno**, Education Director

**Austin Fields**, Marketing Director

**Jan Morrison**, Tour and Company Manager

**Bob Roberts**, Development and Database Manager

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