

Rattestick THEATER

**2022
2023
Annual Report**

INTRO

In August 2022, Daniella Topol announced that the 2022-2023 Season would be her last as Artistic Director. Daniella's fearlessness, compassion, and determination have left an indelible footprint on Rattlestick Theater. This season didn't just mark an end to her tenure, but perfectly encompassed her vision of what Rattlestick could (and should) be: a place that champions new works, develops new voices, commits to work that inspires social change, and opens its doors to the community.

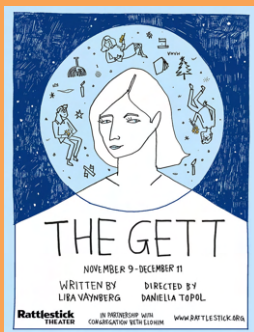
In Spring 2023, Daniella graciously passed the Artistic Director torch to me, and I am grateful to plant new seeds in such fertile ground. Rattlestick thrives because of its community of artists, supporters, and audiences. At its core, Rattlestick is about making work by and for the community. I am thrilled to continue Rattlestick's commitment to artistic excellence and service to the field.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Will Davis", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Will Davis
Artistic Director

ON THE STAGE



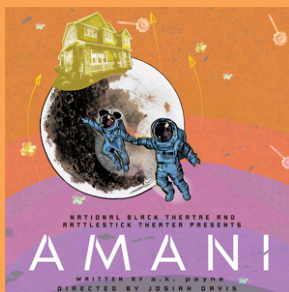
THE GETT

by **Lyba Vaynberg**

directed by **Daniella Topol**

featuring **Ben Edelman, Lyba Vaynberg, Luis Vega and Jennifer Westfeld**

In November 2022, Rattlestick presented in partnership with Congregation Beth Elohim the world premiere of THE GETT. Described as “delightfully appealing,” the play took a bold, authentic look at complex issues in contemporary American Judaism by reimagining sacred texts in personal and poetic ways.



AMANI

by **a.k. payne**

directed by **Josiah Davis**

featuring **Omari K. Chancellor, Kai Heath, Denise Manning, Eden Marryshow, and Mars Rucker**

In February 2023, Rattlestick co-produced with National Black Theatre presented AMANI, a beautiful story of a girl who grows up with her father building a spaceship to outer space. As Amani moves into adulthood, she seeks her voice and her own dreams. Hailed as “very powerful... beautifully, beautifully, beautifully directed and played by a sterling cast.”

"the writer/actor is always like for a place to invent/reinvent/
challenge/a place that forces us to challenge and a place
where it is okay to be afraid and be safe/
Rattlestick is that place for Me"

-Dael Orlandersmith, HORSEDREAMS, UNTIL THE FLOOD, and upcoming SPIRITUS/VIRGIL'S DANCE

The 2022-23 productions continued Rattlestick’s history of being a home for provocative, daring theater artists who feel encouraged to test their boldest ideas.

Putting community partnerships at the core of our creative team and process has changed the way we think about producing work. During the 2022-23 season our community events included Shabbos gatherings, panel discussions on life after incarceration and sonic liberation, and magic demonstrations.

At Rattlestick, we believe that long term investment in artists is central to the development of new work. We are proud to provide year-round opportunities through our residency and fellowship programs

VAN LIER NEW VOICES FELLOWSHIP

With support of the NY Community Trust and the Jerome Foundation, the Van Lier New Voices Fellowship was rehomed from the Lark in 2022. This fellowship provides substantial support to two playwrights of color under 30. The 2022/23 fellows were **May Treuhaff-Ali** and **Minghau Tu**.

MELLON FOUNDATION PLAYWRIGHT IN RESIDENCE

Made possible by the support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, **Basil Kreimendahl** continued his three year playwright residency. More than a standard fellowship, this multi year residency was conceived to reimagine the relationship between an artist and an institution.

DIRECTING FELLOWSHIP

This one year fellowship provides early career directors institutional support to develop and build their professional networks. The 2022/23 Fellow was **Alex Keegan**. This fellowship is made possible by the generous support of **Sonja Berggren** and **Patrick Seaver**.

2022/2023 COMMISSIONED ARTISTS INCLUDED:

Arturo Luis Soria, Dael Orlandersmith, Stacy Rose, Liba Vayneberg, and Rihanna Yazzie.

“Sometimes it feels like theaters use you or try to make your plays fit their agenda. Rattlestick has felt artist-focused, and that is so appreciated.”
-May Treuhaff-Ali, 2022/23 Van Lier New Voices Fellow

A crucial step for playwrights in the development of new work is to get the piece in front of audiences. From a sneak peek to a Q&A, First Look programming provides an opportunity for our audiences to be part of the journey from the beginning.



SEASON JAM

Kicking off the year, Rattlestick invited audiences to a sneak peek of our 28th Season. Season Jam was hosted by **Jesse Eisenberg** and featured offerings from **Basil Kreimendahl**, **Dael Orlandersmith, a.k. Payne**, **Arturo Luis Soria**, **May Trehaff-Ali**, **Minghao Tu**, and **Jennifer Westfeldt**.



THE LAB

In Spring 2023, Rattlestick launched The Lab, a program conceived to support our Fellows and other playwriting alumni to develop their work in collaboration with directors and actors. Over two weeks, The Lab featured the directorship of Rattlestick's Directing Fellow, **Alex Keegan**, as well as invited sharings from Van Lier Fellows **May Trehaff-Ali** and **Minghao Tu**, and playwrights **Arturo Luis Soria**, **William Francis Hoffman**, and **Kareem M. Lucas**.



GLOBAL FORMS THEATER FESTIVAL

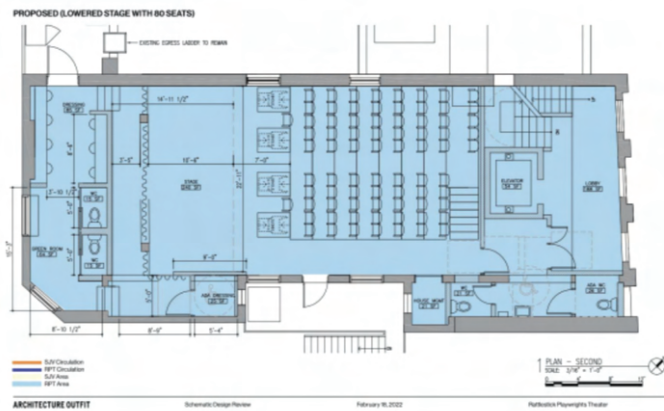
The theme of this year's Global Forms Theater Festival was Green Theater exploring sustainable theater practice. Since the inception of the festival in 2020, Rattlestick, in partnership with New York Theatre Salon, GFTF has featured over 300 artists from over 40 countries through Global Stage, Global Gab, Global Share and Global Learn. In June, Global Stage presented free to the public workshops of *The Discarded* (**Tianding He, China**), *The Sacrifice of Cassambe Becker* (**João Victor Toledo, Brazil**), *Steppe* (**Masha Makutonina, Ukraine**).

"Rattlestick Theater is the only space in the US that is doing the imperative work of uplifting international and immigrant artists. With so many work restrictions on a visa, it provides a platform to be rightfully compensated for showcasing your talent, and creates a rare, indispensable and lifelong community of artists."

-Anula Navlekar (India), Global Forms Artist

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Designed to renovate and restore our historic theater at 224 Waverly Place, Rattlestick's Artistic Home Capital Project's groundbreaking is anticipated to begin Spring 2024. Enhancing accessibility and artistic flexibility of our space has led the design process. Major scope elements include new front and back-of-house accessible restrooms, renovated dressing rooms and lobby area, a lowered stage with flexible seating arrangements, and an elevator connecting our second-floor space to the street level. Funds raised through the capital campaign not only support the renovations, but also for artistic innovation and capacity building, allowing us to produce more ambitiously when we reopen.



Thank you to our Artistic Home Capital Campaign Funders! (\$5k+ as of Dec 31, 2023)

New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the Manhattan Borough President's Office and New York City Council

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Rattlestick's Board of Directors

SUPPORTERS

Rattlestick is grateful for the generosity from all of our donors. Contributed revenues account for 90% of annual income. This critical support allows us to advance the bold work of artists whose voices are underrepresented in the American theater and whose brave work is shaking up the theatrical landscape, while encouraging new ways to gather and experience theater together. Thank you to all of our supporters for being a crucial part of the Rattlestick community.

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS:

The Department of Cultural Affairs, New York State Council on the Arts

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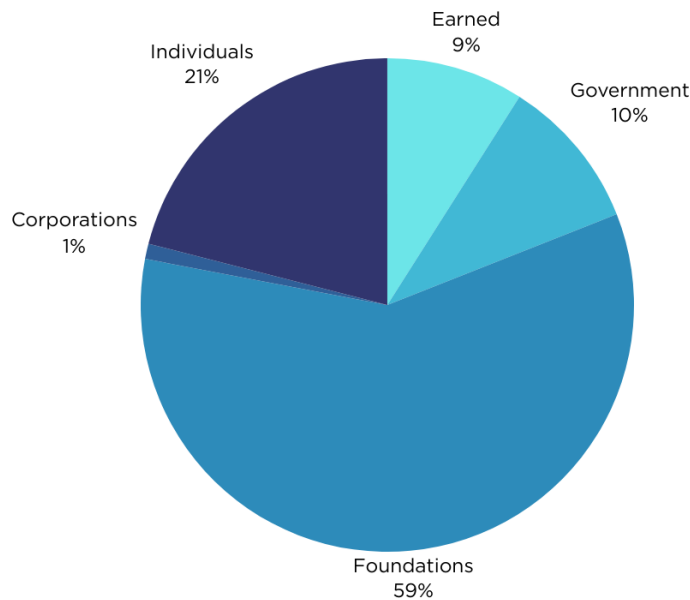
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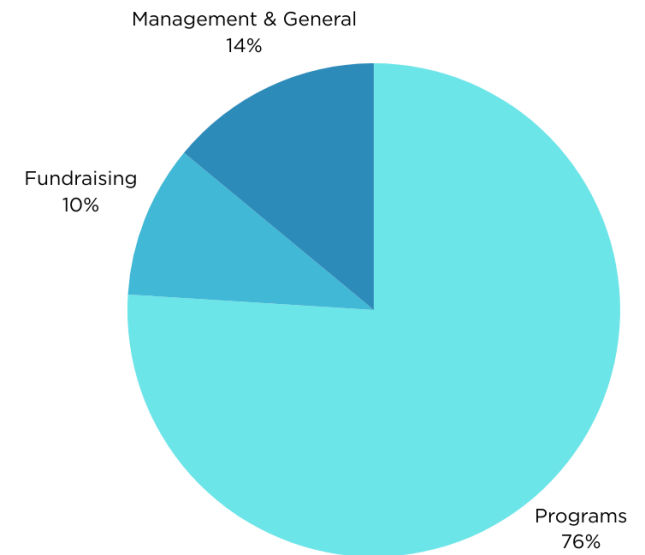
FINANCIALS

Senior Leadership in partnership with the Board of Directors creates and manages budgets that not only prioritize sustainability but demonstrate Rattlestick’s commitment to its mission. Over 75% of 2022-23 expenses were direct program costs and of that nearly 65% covered artists and staff salaries and fees. Over the last many years, Rattlestick has consistently ended its fiscal years with surpluses providing a steady growth of its overall net assets. FY23 ended with an unrestricted surplus of \$174,940 increasing its total unrestricted net assets to \$1,393,350. This was due to rigorous efforts in securing contributed revenues, as well as careful budget planning and expense management.

INCOME:



EXPENSES:



Percentages are derived from completed FY23 audited figures and only include unrestricted income for the year. Fiscal year begins August 1.

ABOUT RATTLESTICK

MISSION & HISTORY

Founded in 1994 by David van Asselt and Gary Bonasorte, Rattlestick Theater has been steadfast in producing diverse, challenging, and provocative plays while fostering the future voices of the American theater. Now led by Artistic Director Will Davis, the first transgender person to run an off-Broadway theater, we are proud to make Rattlestick a place that is focused on energetic theater that responds to the complexities of our culture in conversation with community partners. Our mission is to produce ambitious plays to inspire empathy and provoke conversation that will lead to positive social change.

From our historic West Village theater, Rattlestick has produced the first plays and early works of some of today's leading voices, including Martyna Majok (*Ironbound*), Diana Oh (*mylingerieplay*), and Heidi Schreck (*There Are No More Big Secrets*). We are proud to make Rattlestick a place where some of our nation's most celebrated playwrights feel safe to test their boldest ideas, including Dael Orlandersmith (*Until the Flood*), José Rivera (*Massacre, Sing to Your Children*), and Sam Hunter (*Lewiston/Clarkston*, nominated for the Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play and the Outer Critics Circle Awards for Outstanding New Off-Broadway Play).

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