THRØWN
STØNE

CONNECTION

2023 Annual Report

Jason Peck and Jonathan Winn

Pause for Inflection

Thrown Stone is an anomaly in Connecticut. Among the 17 professional theaters in the state, six are Connecticut Flagship Producing Theatres, with budgets between $4 million and $8 million (reported 2020-2022). Thrown Stone and ten others, recognized and reviewed by the Connecticut Critics Circle, operate with expenses ranging from $200,000 to $3 million annually (reported 2020-2022). The median annual expense figure for all 17 theatres was just over $1.5 million. Thrown Stone's expenses peaked in 2022 at $224,000, by far the lowest in this set.

Two of these 17 theatres are itinerant, meaning they don't have a permanent performance facility. The Long Wharf Theatre left its facility in 2022, though it maintains office space in downtown New Haven. Thrown Stone is the other one — we've never operated our own facility. A dozen of these theatres engage in some form of new play development or production, but only two, Thrown Stone and The Eugene O'Neill Theatre Center, engage in new work exclusively — though the O'Neill does not produce the plays they develop. The median annual expenses for companies that engage in new work is $3.7 million. Thrown Stone's final 2023 expenses amounted to $177,700, under 5% of that figure.

We have achieved much since our founding in 2016, with nine productions, four world premieres, and seven regional premieres. Our low budget figures belie the fact that we have elected to pay our artists by the "favored nations" model, where union and nonunion actors and stage managers are paid the same weekly rate. Creative teams and crew are also compensated fairly, and never below $15 per hour. Low overhead, an entirely volunteer administrative staff, and an active and engaged board have helped Thrown Stone has survive and thrive.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, the operating environment for theatres everywhere has changed drastically. Government and institutional support have cratered while production costs have skyrocketed. Housing, transportation, and facilities are particularly challenging here in Ridgefield. Many skilled artists and artisans have left the profession due to stubbornly low wages and an overall lack of opportunity. Ticket buying habits have changed, and show cancellations due to illness remain a substantial threat to our earned revenue. This is an inflection point for the American theatre, and Thrown Stone is not exempt.

We need to find a new and more sustainable way of operating. In 2024 we will pause productions while our board explores new strategies for fulfilling our mission in this challenging new reality. With no overhead, and having never taken on debt, we are well-positioned to rethink the way we engage our region with new and re-imagined work in intimate settings. With your support, Thrown Stone will continue to move, connect, and challenge all who join the conversation.

New Dramatists Hosts 'Seven Cousins' Workshop

In April of this year, New Dramatists held a workshop of Tammy Ryan's *Seven Cousins for a Horse*. The workshop, supported by the Jerry A. Tishman Playwrights Creativity Fund and the Venturous Theater Fund, was instrumental to the development of the new play, which received its world premiere in July.

Directed by Thrown Stone Co-Artistic Director, Jonathan Winn, the cast — Shannon Helene Barnes, Will Jeffries, Emmanuelle Nadeau, Aidan Meachem, Jason Peck, Marissa Ruben, and Bridget Ann White — worked closely with Ryan, stage manager Alex Moon, and the renowned dramaturg Anne Cattaneo in a series of rehearsals and readings. The feedback provided by the creative team, New Dramatists' staff — Playwrights Lab Associate Director Tyler Christie, Playwrights Lab Director John Steber, and Artistic Director Emily Morse — and invited guests helped Ryan identify opportunities for further development of the text.

Ryan is a third-year resident at New Dramatists, one of the country's leading playwright centers and new play laboratories. New Dramatists provides playwrights with seven-year residencies, during which they receive financial support, artistic resources, and a community of peers to help them develop their work. Thrown Stone is grateful for the New Dramatists' generous hospitality and the guidance and insight we received.

SEVEN COUSINS FOR A HORSE

2023 Production Recap

Thrown Stone's 2023 season featured the world premiere of *Seven Cousins for a Horse* by Tammy Ryan. Originally commissioned in 2020 with underwriting by the Daniel E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust, *Seven Cousins* tells the story of the little-known 19th-century limner, Ammi Phillips, now gaining notoriety as the most prolific folk artist in American history. The play opens on Phillips's return to his hometown in the wake of a personal tragedy. It is 1848, a time of great change. The Seneca Falls Convention is about to call for universal suffrage, chattel slavery has finally ended in Connecticut, and there is already talk of a war between the states. The play explores themes of generational conflict, struggle and perseverance, the role of the artist, self-determination, sacrifice, and the restorative power of family. The product of three years of passionate work, *Seven Cousins* was a popular and critical success:

> *"Delightful"* — Bonnie Goldberg, CT Critics Circle
>
> *Best Plays of 2023 "A remarkable new work… A very confident, primed, and able ensemble… engaging, whimsical, and enjoyably immersive"*
> — James Ruocco, CT Critics Circle
>
> *"A first-class production"* — Zander Opper, CT Critics Circle

Seven Cousins for a Horse was directed by Jonathan Winn; scenic design and technical direction was by Richard Harrison, lighting design was by Jiahao (Neil) Qiu 邱嘉皓, projection design was by Christopher Evans, costume design by Brenda Phelps, properties design by Abigail Harrison, the score was by Aidan Meachem, the sound design was by Jason Peck, the movement director was Amy Piantaggini, the master electrician was Eric Baker, the Line Producer was Corinne Woods, the assistant director was Sarah Ford, and the Production Stage Manager was Lauryn Elizabeth. The cast was as follows: Will Jeffries, Jason Peck, Bridget Ann White, Emma Factor, Shannon Helene Barnes, Emmanuelle Nadeau, and Aidan Meachem. The crew and staff included Amelia McGee, Jessi Cohen, Daphne Parker, Will Bruno, Antoinette Manteau, Sarah Ford, Kate Fitzpatrick, and Phyllis Kinlow.

Seven Cousins explores themes of generational conflict, struggle and perseverance, the role of the artist, self-determination, liberation, sacrifice, and the restorative power of family. Over just ten performances in a tiny, 60-seat house in Ridgefield, *Seven Cousins for a Horse* exemplified our mission to move, connect, and challenge all who join the conversation with new theatre created from the first word in our own back yard. To view the program, visit thrownstone.org/***7cp***

2023 New Connections Award Honoree

Kay Ables, the renowned historian and curator was honored as the 2023 New Connections Award recipient at a ceremony after the opening night performance of *Seven Cousiins for a Horse*. The award was presented by WSHU reporter Davis Dunavin. The New Connections Awards were envisioned to recognize individuals who exemplify Thrown Stone's values and our mission to move, connect, and challenge all who join our theatrical conversation. In 2023, our theme was Bringing Our History to Life. Kay Ables has demonstrated exceptional dedication and passion in preserving and sharing Ridgefield's rich historical heritage.

Through extensive research and tireless efforts, Kay has not only brought our history to life — she put it into context, helping generations of Ridgefield residents understand our rich heritage and their place in it. As town historian, she curated captivating exhibits, organized engaging events, and perhaps most significantly, helped save the David Scott House, now the headquarters of the Ridgefield Historical Society. Her deep knowledge and love for Ridgefield's past have enriched our community beyond measure.

Thrown Stone is immensely grateful for Kay's contributions to our community, and we are delighted to celebrate her work with this award..

Above, left to right: Will Jeffries, Emma Factor, Bridget Ann White, Jason Peck, Emmanuelle Nadeu, Aidan Meachem, and Shannon Helene Barnes. Chuck Jennes Photography.

Jason Peck & Bridget Ann White

Emma Factor

Emmanuelle Nadeau

Shannon Helene Barnes

Chuck Jennes Photography

An Invitation to the Conversation

The National Endowment for the Arts awarded Thrown Stone a "Challenge America" grant to launch *An Invitation to the Conversation,* a program that aims to make theatre financially accessible and inclusive for all residents of the greater Danbury, CT region. In July, with the world premiere of *Seven Cousins for a Horse,* the program provided admission (including round-trip transportation) for 48 participants, prioritizing outreach to social service agencies and comomunity groups. Audience Development Coordinator Phyllis Kinlow spearheaded outreach efforts. This initiative underscores Thrown Stone's commitment to fostering a more diverse and accessible theatrical culture in the community.

Inaugural Playwriting Fellowship Concludes

Thrown Stone's inaugural 068 Magazine Fellowship concluded on July 28th with a workshop reading of Phanésia Pharel's new full-length play, *Waterfall*, at the renowned Old Globe Theatre in San Diego, CA. Facilitated by Danielle Mages Amato, Director of New Plays and Dramaturgy, and Sonia Desai, Literary Associate, the workshop brought to life Pharel's exploration of the intricate mother-daughter bond. The workshop was directed by Delicia Turner Sonnenberg, performed by Andrea Patterson and Leovina Charles, and stage managed by Kira Vine.

"*Waterfall* is about two stubborn Haitian-American women who love each other mightily but don't see eye to eye," says Pharel. "They ask each other and us, black immigrant women, what is the covenant of the American dream?"

A previous version of *Waterfall* was featured as a one-act play entitled *Just the Two of Us* at the 2023 Wagner Festival of New Plays at UC San Diego. This progression exemplifies the dynamism of Pharel's work, the power of institutional and artistic collaboration, and the necessity of funding opportunities like playwriting fellowships to move the arts forward. In March of 2024, Waterfall was honored with **The Kennedy Center's Lorraine Hansberry Playwriting Award.** Thrown Stone thanks 068 Magazine, Dee Dee Colabella, Old Globe Artistic Producer Kim Heil, and all of our collaborators for making our first plawriting fellowship such a success.

Gathering, A Special Storytelling Event

Over two performances at the Teen Barn in Ridgefield November 18th and 19th, Thrown Stone's *Gathering* was a a potent celebration of storytelling. The special event, co-sponsored by the Cultural Alliance of Western Connecticut and the Boys and Girls Club of Ridgefield, showcased compelling voices from our community and beyond.

The sold-out event captivated audiences with narratives by Randye Kaye, Cathy Carlton, Matt Austin, Robert Becker, Kate Katcher, Tiffany Johnson, Peter Bachman, Barb Jennes, and Darla Shaw. From chance first encounters, to last goodbyes, these moving, funny, and occasionally gut-wrenching tales revealed the power of coming together at a time when we are re-learning what it means to gather.

FACTS

MISSION

To engage our region with new and reimagined theatre in intimate settings, creating a body of work that moves, connects, and challenges all who join the conversation.

PERSONNEL

Jason Peck & Jonathan Winn,
Co-Artistic Directors

Corrine Woods, Business Manager

Richard Harrison, Artistic Associate

Maria McConville, Artistic Associate

BOARD

Andrew Levine, President

Emily Wilson, Vice President

Dean Miller, Treasurer

Jonathan Winn, Secretary

Jennifer Dineen

Kolton Harris

Jeff Krulwich

Kevin Mambo

Jason Peck

Kate Schardt

Daniela Sikora

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GOVERNANCE

Thrown Stone is a 501(c)(3) organization.

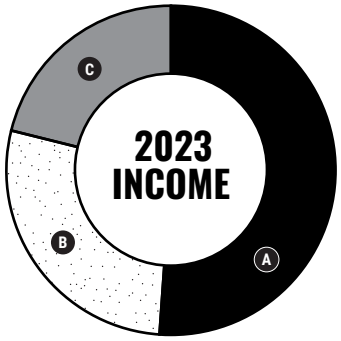
EIN: 81-1683094.

D-U-N-S Number: 080603526.

2017-2023 IRS Form 990, Bylaws, Conflict Of Interest Policy, and Sexual Harassment Policy available upon request.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	EXPENSES	NET ASSETS
2016	$8,600	$2,800
2017	$64,800	$14,700
2018	$100,400	$25,500
2019	$122,300	$41,500
2020	$20,800	$160,900
2021	$148,800	$175,800
2022	$224,000	$115,600
2023	$177,700	$71,900

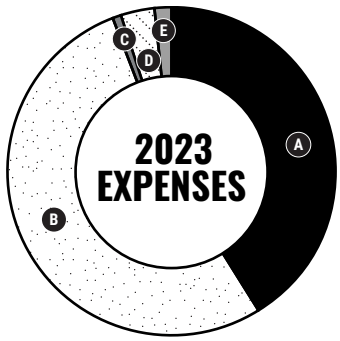


A. Donations and Grants $68,600

B. In-Kind Donations. $37,100

C. Ticket Sales, Concessions, Other $28,200

Total $133,900



A. Production, Space Rental, Marketing $73,100

B. Artist and Other Salaries $94,500

C. Commissions & Licensing $1,700

D. Fellowship $5,500

E. General Operating $2,900

Total $177,700

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

We thank our generous donors, grantors, and sponsors for their financial support, along with generous in-kind donations from individuals and businesses for media, services, artist housing/travel, and catering.

In 2023, our single production featured the world premiere of a play that we commissioned, as compared to two productions in repertory in 2022. This resulted in lower production and salary costs compared to last year. Once again over 98% of our 2023 expenses went toward the direct costs of programming — artist and other salaries, fellowship, commissions and licensing, production, space rental, and marketing costs.

HISTORY

2023 The World Premiere of ***Seven Cousins for a Horse*** by Tammy Ryan; conclusion of **068 Magazine Playwriting Fellowship**

2022 The New England Premieres of ***Athena*** by Gracie Gardner and ***Hysterical!*** by Elenna Stauffer, in repertory; Full-length commission of ***Seven Cousins for a Horse*** by Tammy Ryan; **068 Magazine Playwriting Fellowship.**

2021 The World Premiere of *The Suburbs:* ***The Caterers*** by Tony Meneses, ***Should We Dance Instead?*** by Phanésia Pharel, and ***An Education: How To Confront the Classics*** by Catherine Yu

2020 Productions cancelled due to COVID-19.

2019 The Connecticut Premiere of ***Cry it Out*** by Molly Smith Metzler and The East Coast Premiere of ***Birds of North America*** by Anna Moench, in repertory at Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance; staged reading of *Willing* by Claire Glubiak at the Ridgefield Library

2018 The New England Premiere of ***The Arsonists*** by Jacqueline Goldfinger and The East Coast Premiere of ***Where All Good Rabbits Go*** by Karina Cochran, in repertory at Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance

2017 The U.S. Premiere of ***Milk*** by Ross Dunsmore at Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance; Chekhov International Theatre Festival staged reading of ***The Butcher*** by Gwydion Suilebhan

2016 Debut Summer Reading Series: ***The Fields of Blue and Glow*** by August Schulenberg and ***Blink*** by Kate Moira Ryan at the Ridgefield Library; Chekhov International Theatre Festival staged reading of ***Milk*** by Ross Dunsmore

98% of our expenses go directly into our programs

2023 PARTNERS

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068 Magazine*
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Underwriters ($10,000+)

Black Walnut*
Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development Office of the Arts
CT Humanities
National Endowment for the Arts

Producing ($5,000+)

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National New Play Network
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Ridgefield Chamber of Commerce
Ridgefield Chorale
Ridgefield Conservatory of Dance
Ridgefield Economic and Community Development Commission
Ridgefield Historical Society
Ridgefield Library

Thank you!

2023 INDIVIDUAL DONORS

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SPECIAL THANKS

Kay Ables
Actor's Equity Association
Jefferey Albanesi
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Besty Strauss, *Curator*
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Vicki Trainer
John Vignoli
Corinne Woods
Walt Woodward
CT State Historian, Emeritus

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the town of Ridgefield exists on the ancestral homelands of the Ramapo, Lenape and Wiechquaesgeck who have been living and working on this land since time immemorial. It is important that we express our gratitude and appreciation by understanding the long history that has brought us to this land and seek to understand our place within that history. Truth and acknowledgement of our past is crucial to building mutual respect to connect us once again regardless of barriers of heritage and difference For more information, visit iaismuseum.org.

*Includes in-kind donation of goods or services.

We apologize for any errors or omissions — please email us with any corrections or if you wish to remain anonymous in the future.

THRØWN
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A NEW THEATRICAL EXPERIENCE
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Front Cover:
Will Jeffries and Jason Peck in *Seven Cousins for a Horse* by Tammy Ryan, 2023
Chuck Jennes Photography

Back Cover:
Jonathan Winn, Will Jeffries, Brenda Phelps, Jason Peck, Aidan Meachem, Shannon Helene Barnes, Lauryn Elizabeth, Bridget Ann White, Jessi Cohen, Emmanuelle Nadeau, Sarah Ford, and Emma Factor.