

Cheers to tonight's honoree, the legendary Chita Rivera, on receiving the Jason Robards Award for Excellence in Theatre.

Congratulations to Roundabout Theatre Company on a successful return to live performances this season.

VICKI GROSS and JONATHAN LEVINE





2022 GALA HONORING

CHITA RIVERA

WITH SPECIAL CONCERT PERFORMANCE BY
SARA BAREILLES

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CEO

Todd Haimes

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Gala performance underwritten by Dr. Taylor W. Lawrence and Dr. Ryan P. Shelhamer

Roundabout thanks all of the artists and technicians who have generously donated their time to tonight's event and helped make this evening possible. We wish to express our gratitude to the Performers' Unions: Actors' Equity Association, American Guild of Musical Artists, American Guild of Variety Artists, and SAG-AFTRA through Theatre Authority, Inc. for their cooperation in permitting the artists to appear on this program.

Gala proceeds benefit Roundabout Theatre Company's many initiatives including our education programs.

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LETTER FROM THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CEO TODD HAIMES



WELCOME TO ROUNDABOUT'S 2022 GALA. TONIGHT, WE CELEBRATE OUR SUPPORTERS, OUR STAFF, THE ARTISTS WITH WHOM WE WORK, OUR TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY, OUR SUBSCRIBERS AND AUDIENCES, AND, MOST OF ALL, THE ONGOING RECOVERY OF THE LIVE THEATRE WE CHERISH, THANKS TO YOU ALL.

Tonight's Jason Robards Award honoree, Chita Rivera, personifies everything we love about theatre. Excellence, commitment, passion, connection: These are qualities Chita brings to the stage and everything she has done through her remarkable career. Having her become part of Roundabout with her performances in *Nine* and *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* was an inestimable thrill for our entire organization and for me personally. Recognizing her tonight is but a small acknowledgement of what she has brought to every theatre-lover's life. Speaking of excellence and a great love for theatre, I'd like to offer my gratitude to Sara Bareilles as she joins the Roundabout family with tonight's performance. Our evening, and our entire industry, are richer for your having become part of our world.

I offer more thanks to our dedicated and tireless Board of Directors and Leadership Council; tonight's Gala Co-Chairs Samantha Rudin Earls, David Earls, Michael Slocum, and Chaya Slocum; and Capital One for their generous sponsorship of tonight's paddle raise for our education programs.

Thank you for joining us, tonight and all year long.

LETTER FROM THE GALA CHAIRS

HAT A JOY IT IS TO WELCOME YOU TO THIS YEAR'S ROUNDABOUT GALA. AS THEATRE REBUILDS AUDIENCES, TONIGHT WE HONOR ITS ABILITY TO HEAL, TO CONNECT, TO INSPIRE US ALL—WITH ROUNDABOUT TAKING A LEADING

ROLE, ON STAGE AND OFF. AS THE EVENING'S CO-CHAIRS, WE SALUTE YOU, OUR HONOREE CHITA RIVERA, AND TONIGHT'S PERFORMER SARA BAREILLES.

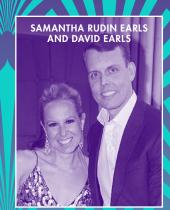
From Caroline, or Change and Trouble in Mind through this spring's broad range of shows, Roundabout's work on stage this year would be extraordinary at any time; under this season's challenging circumstances, it's been truly miraculous. And we remain proud of our staff and teachers who have continued to adapt to meet the needs of our city's most valued youth and community work, making New York City a richer place.

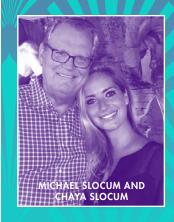
Customized curriculum for nearly two dozen schools citywide. Pioneering backstage career training for young adults. Broad and newly expanded community partnerships to reach ever more diverse populations. All of these are central to Roundabout's mission — and the direct beneficiaries of your support tonight.

There are many members of the Roundabout family that we want to spotlight, including:

- ♦ The Auction Committee led by Co-Chairs Sylvia Golden and Wendy Barker, and Vice Chair Colleen Cook
- Dr. Taylor W. Lawrence and Dr. Ryan P. Shelhamer for underwriting the concert performance by Sara Bareilles

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors, we thank all of you for your generosity to Roundabout both this evening and throughout the year.





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*in memoriam

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he Jason Robards Award
for Excellence in Theatre
is given to individuals and
organizations who have
made an indelible impact on the theatre
world. It is named to honor his lifelong
commitment to theatre and his incredible
support of Roundabout both on stage
and off.

In 1994, Jason Robards made his Roundabout debut in the first New York revival of Harold Pinter's No Man's Land with his dear friend, Christopher Plummer. Soon after, he and Chris joined Roundabout's Board of Directors and worked tirelessly to support Artistic Director Todd Haimes' idea to create a second, Off-Broadway stage that would be a home to new plays by today's greatest writers. He became our distinguished Artist-in-Residence during the inaugural 1995-96 season at the Laura Pels Theatre with performances in Pinter's Moonlight and Brian Friel's Molly Sweeney and served as a member of Roundabout's Board until his death in 2000.

2022

Chita Rivera

2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer, United States Senator, in Gratitude for the Save our Stages Act

2020

Alan Cumming
Michael Kors and
Lance Le Pere

2019

John Lithgow

2018

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2017

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2015

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2012

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2009

Bank of America Douglas Durst, The Durst Organization

2007

Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg

Speaker Christine C. Quinn, Council of the City of New York

2005

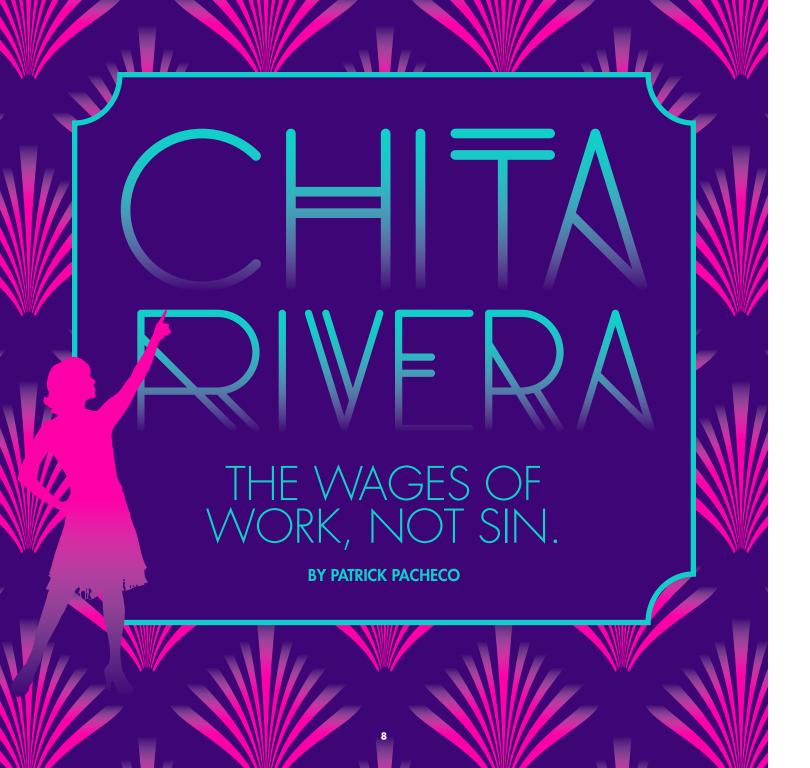
Stephen Sondheim

2004

John Kander Fred Ebb

2002

Christopher Plummer



sk Chita Rivera what "When Chita's in a room, people still don't know she's not the diva, she's the about her after nearly leader," says Scott Ellis, Roundabout's Deputy Artistic seven decades in the public eye and she cheekily Director who directed her replies, "I'm not nearly as nice as in the 2012 revival of people think I am." At any rate, The Mystery of Edwin "nice" is far too anemic a word to apply to the woman born Dolores Conchita Figueroa del Rivero. "Fearless," comes to mind. Fierce. Funny. Sensual. Versatile. Disciplined. And, most of all, the consummate professional.

Antonio Banderas & Chita Nine, 2003 Photo by Joan Marcus

Drood. "She has

an ethic that says,

'We're going to

get down to work.

In a joyful way!"

That laser-like focus began when as an athletic, hyperactive nine-year-old, Rivera went crashing through the coffee table in the family home in Washington, D.C. Her widowed mother Katherine, raising five children, knew what to do. She enlisted her in the Jones-Haywood Dance School which led, seven years later, to a scholarship to the School of American Ballet in New York. In 1952, on a whim, she accompanied a fellow student to auditions for the dance chorus in the



Chita Rivera, Stephen Sondheim, Leonard Bernstein, Carol Lawrence, and cast around piano in rehearsal for the stage production of West Side Story, 1957. Photo by Friedman-Abeles, © Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

national touring company of *Call Me Madam*. Brassily putting herself forward, she got the job. The rest, as they say, is history—one that includes a record ten Tony Award nominations, two wins (and a 2018 Lifetime Achievement Tony), a Kennedy Center Honor, and the Presidential

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Medal of Freedom. It also includes creating such iconic roles as Anita in West Side Story, Rosie in Bye, Bye Birdie, Velma in Chicago, Aurora in Kiss of the Spider Woman, and, most recently, Claire Zachanassian in The Visit.

Never one to rest on past achievements, Rivera's readiness to take on a challenge was something director David Leveaux recognized when in 2003, he cast her in the Roundabout revival of *Nine* as the pesky producer Liliane La Fleur. She revisited Roundabout in 2012 when she assayed the role of Princess Puffer in the revival of the Rupert Holmes's musical, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Playing the proprietor of an opium den, Rivera was in her devilish element, singing "The Wages of Sin," "Garden Path to Hell," and a song which, now in the seventh decade of her career, could be a personal anthem: "Don't Quit While You're Ahead."

PATRICK PACHECO: Being in the revivals of *Nine* and *Drood* was a departure since you'd largely created roles on Broadway.

CHITA RIVERA: Definitely. I was fortunate enough to have done that throughout most of my career. Maybe it was a defense mechanism because I never wanted to be compared to someone else. But I've always felt that whomever first breathed life into a character owned that character.

Are you proprietary about, say Anita, when it comes to revivals, the 1961 movie, and now the Steven Spielberg film?

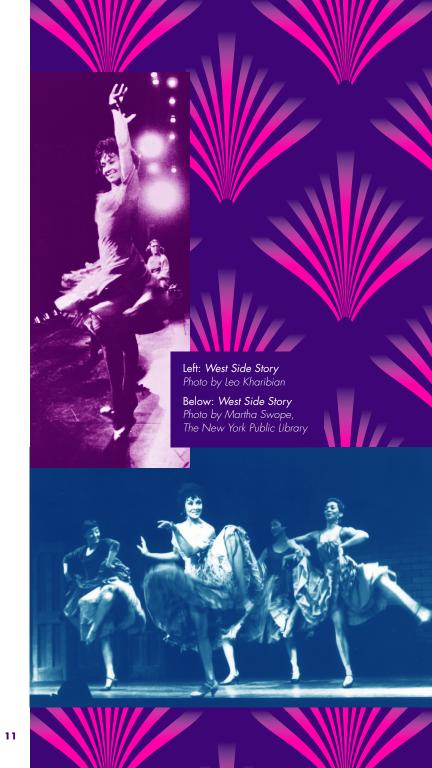
Absolutely. I do feel I own Anita and there's no reason to let go of her. Why would I? I know her—right down to marrow. She still lives in me and if I could, I would play her today! I feel that way about the other characters I've created. Velma and Aurora and Rosie. It was an exciting time when together, with the writers and directors, we created these women. Somebody pushed you to the limit and you had to respond. I felt as though I was discovering myself each time.

So were you intimidated stepping into the role of Princess Puffer so memorably created by Cleo Laine?

There is only one Cleo Laine! Nobody looks like her. Nobody sounds like her. She is a singular and brilliant vocal stylist. So I enjoyed playing the role but never felt I owned it. I couldn't and wouldn't mimic her. I only hoped that I could come up to the standard she had set. It probably goes back to my thinking that I never really had a good voice or a vocal style.

A lot of people would disagree, but it's also true that you are an excellent interpreter of character through song.

Alright. Yes. Thanks for translating it for me. I rely a lot on the composer and lyricist. I live through the words onstage. That's how I find my character. That's what I tell the kids today. Trust the words. Trust the writers and the lyricists. They will guide you to the character if you're fortunate enough to be in an intelligent, logical work.





Left: Chita & Dick Van Dyke, Bye Bye Birdie, 1960. Photo by Friedman-Abeles, The New York Public Library Above: Chita & Liza Minnelli, The Rink, 1984. Photo by Ken Howard

Why did you decide to do Drood?

Simple. It was a smart piece. I was invited to lunch with Scott and Rupert and I liked the company. I loved Rupert's work, he was hip and jazzy and from the world of pop music. Scott and I had worked together in *The Rink* when he was an actor. I wasn't sure if he'd had enough experience as a director. But I realized early on that I was in good hands.

Are you instinctual about your choices when it comes to roles?

I don't know. I go through a lot of processes. I suppose it's a combination, instinct and looking closely at other stuff. Who are the writers? Who's the director? Can I relate to the material? I clearly remember that when Dick [Seff, my agent] took me

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to listen to the songs of *Bye Bye Birdie* for the first time, I was supposed to play it cool so he could drive a harder bargain since they wanted me. But from the moment Charles [Strouse] and Lee [Adams] started playing the songs, I jumped up and said, "I gotta be in this!" I wanted to join the party with them and Michael Stewart. I wanted to live in that room.

How was it to be part of an ensemble in *Drood* as opposed to a starring role?

Great! It's very tough to carry a show by yourself. Gwen [Verdon] and I had each other on *Chicago*. Here, we were a cast of brothers and sisters all on the same level, supporting each other, having each other's back. Giving each other what we needed.

Did it take you back to the young Chita Rivera in the chorus of Call Me Madam, Guys and Dolls, or Can-Can?

You never lose that feeling. I never have. You are what you have been and what you're searching to be at any given moment. You recognize the moment as it occurs, knowing it will never come again, because that's live theatre. But it's always a part of you. And the people you work with are always a part of you.

When you became a star, did you feel it would set you apart?

I wouldn't let it. That's why I always kept my dressing room door open. I made a point of it. When I was coming up, the stars' dressing rooms were almost always closed. That's why it was so unusual when Gwen, who had just become a star in Can-Can, called me into hers. I was in the chorus and had auditioned to be her understudy and didn't get it. She said, "Listen, Chita. You don't need to understudy anybody. Create your

Above: Chita & Gwen Verdon, Chicago, 1975. Photo by Martha Swope, The New York Public Library

own roles. Forge your own path." Which was incredibly generous of her. I've tried to pass that on.

When somebody in a cast doesn't meet your exacting standard, is that when you can be "not as nice" as we think you are?

(Laughs) If someone is being too selfish or self-concerned, damaging to the company, that can be a problem. If it feels wrong, you've got to sort it out. We're only as good as what we give each other. I think this goes back to being partnered, first in ballet by Louis Johnson at Doris Jones's school in Washington, D.C. and then studying at the School of American Ballet, and being in choruses on Broadway. It's a question of working with someone. Not at them.

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You've worked with a wide scope of directors, some of whom have "punishing" reputations, like Jerome Robbins of *West Side Story* and Bob Fosse of *Chicago*. Can that be detrimental?

Jerry was hard. You do hear stories about Jerry but he was never mean or nasty to me. Rehearsals were absolutely stimulating because he was asking us to do things that we never thought we could. And yet we did them because he insisted. And you had to make it look easy. The audience isn't supposed to see the rigor.

And Bob Fosse?

Bobby was quieter than Jerry but just as demanding. When I was rehearsing "I Can't Do It Alone," Bobby asked me to jump from one position to a light a few feet away. I misunderstood and jumped six or seven feet away. (Laughs). Dancers are used to being workhorses. Ballet teachers always said, "It hurts? Get used to it."

What do you need from a director to do your best work?

Understanding. Clarity of vision. Patience. Scott was wonderful on *Drood*. On the first day of rehearsals, he brought in a crystal mouse. It was a mouse I had given to all the cast members as opening night gifts for *The Rink*. This was, like 30 years before. That's the wonderful thing about theatre. It's a continuum. There are things that sort of live outside of the room itself, spiritual connections that really inform the work. A mouse is sometimes more than a mouse

The Rink was a tough one. What do you learn from failure?

Never do it again. (Laughs) The flowers were as fresh coming into my dressing room for the opening night for *Bring Back Birdie* as they were when they were leaving the next day. (Laughs) But whether it's a hit or a flop, you think, move on.

What was the challenge of playing Princess Puffer in *Drood*?

I liked her! She understands and accepts people who enjoy the seedy side of life and so do I! (Laughs) I had to talk directly to the audience which was fun. I could be a little bit of the Princess and a little bit of Chita. What was scary was when the audience voted on who the killer was. That meant you had to memorize an alternate ending. As I exited stage left, I kept thinking, "Don't pick me! Don't pick me!" It really kept me on my toes.

I think you were chosen 46 times during the run.

Oh, God. Really! That many? You just hope and pray that you're understood by the audience. That they get what you're doing. You can have a whole theatre cheering for you and there'll be that one person who just doesn't understand what you're trying to do and you think, "I'm just not enough." I think every actor struggles with that insecurity. You're constantly being judged in the theatre and there's no place to hide.

You also spoke directly to the audience as Liliane La Fleur in *Nine*. How did that compare?

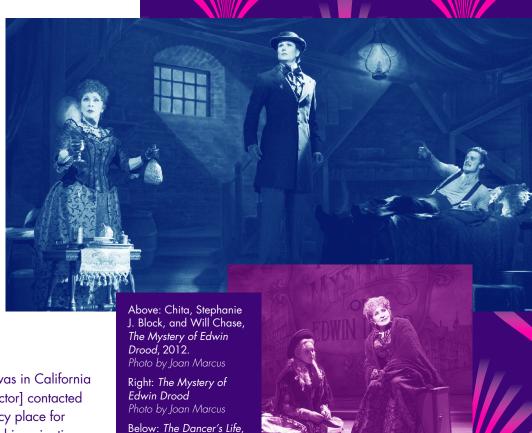
By that time, it helped that I had become more used to talking to an audience through my club act. And I didn't feel quite as much pressure to live up to what Liliane [Montevecchi] had done. She'd been brilliant in the role but I felt I could make the character more of my own. It wasn't like the case with Cleo.

What appealed to you about doing it?

I didn't want to do it at first. I was in California when David [Leveaux, the director] contacted me and took me out to this fancy place for lunch. He had such a wonderful imagination and sense of humor. That won me over. And Antonio [Banderas]! I immediately had this image of him as being this huge, beautiful bird and I would ride on his back. The trip would be gorgeous and fabulous. And it was!

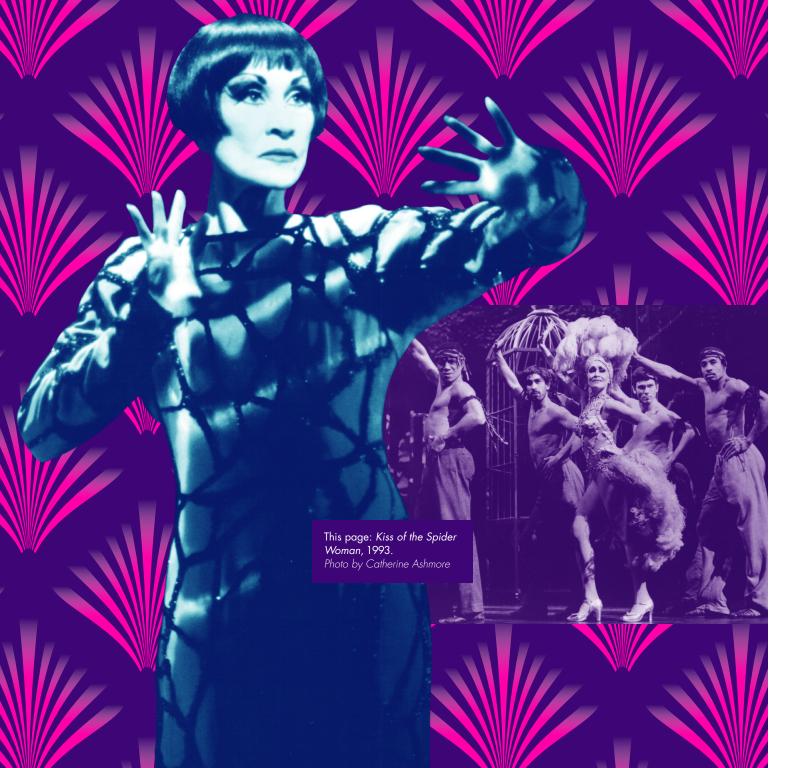
Nine and Drood were your first forays working in the non-profit arena. How did that strike you?

It felt like a family, like a club. The pressures didn't seem quite as stark as the commercial theatre. You



2005.

Photo by Paul Kolnik



could take chances that you couldn't take when you were out of town in Philly or Boston. You were on a schedule and you knew the score. Maybe that's because they were also revivals.

What is your advice to young people?

Be prepared. Learn. Learn. Give it your all. I'm always gratified when they know who I am. That means they know their history and that's so important. Because you have to know what came before, whose shoulders you are standing on as you pursue a career. When I was young, I would stand in the wings and just soak it all in. Watching Elaine [Stritch] in Call Me Madam. Bea Arthur [Shoestring Revue], Sammy Davis [Mr. Wonderful]. They taught me so much. So if you're lucky enough to be in something like a West Side Story, it's God tapping you on the shoulder, saying "I'm going to give you this. Now just do what you have to do. And be worthy of it!"

Your most recent musical, *The Visit*, must have been quite emotional. The piece itself, about an avenging heiress, is intense to begin with but your co-star Roger Rees was then struggling with terminal cancer. Your longtime friend, the writer Terrence McNally, was also dealing with health problems.

It just makes the responsibility to do your best even more important and personal. But the mood of the company was not sad or depressing. We played jokes on each other offstage. I'd come into my dressing room and [castmate] David Garrison had filled my toilet bowl with plastic eggs!

The theatre can be curative?

Oh, yes! That's why Roger was so intent on coming in night after night as long as he possibly could. He felt so alive there. I miss Roger. I miss Terrence. I miss Freddy [Ebb]. That's why I cherish and never take for granted any of it.





Above: Chita, Liza Minnelli, John Kander, and Fred Ebb rehearsing *The Rink*, 1984. *Photo by Martha Swope*

Below: Chita & Roger Rees in *The Visit*, 2015.

Photo by Thom Kaine

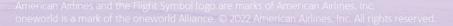
American Airlines

American is proud to be the official airline of Roundabout Theatre Company.

Congratulations **Chita Rivera** on tonight's honor!



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Thanks for putting art in the heart of the community

Bank of America recognizes Roundabout Theatre Company for its success in bringing the arts to performers and audiences throughout the community. We commend you on creating an opportunity for all to enjoy and share a cultural experience and join you in celebrating the legendary Chita Rivera.

Visit us at bankofamerica.com/arts.



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Congratulations to
Roundabout Theatre Company for a
remarkable season and a
much-anticipated return to live theatre.

We applaud the entire Roundabout staff for their tireless dedication and hard work, both on and off the stage.

Thank you!

CYNTHIA and RON BECK



Congratulations Chita Rivera on receiving this year's Jason Robards Award for Excellence in Theatre. What a talent you are!

We also wish sincerely to thank Todd Haimes, Julia Levy, Sydney Beers, Steve Dow and the entire hardworking Roundabout staff, my fellow board members—especially Gala Chairs Samantha Rudin Earls and David Earls and Michael Slocum and Chaya Slocum—as well as the constellation of artists that, all together, comprise the Roundabout Family. Here's to yet another season producing some of the best theatre in the world. We look forward to many more!

ROXANNE and **SCOTT BOK**

MARDEE BROWN and JEFF LIBERT

applaud Roundabout — Todd Haimes, Julia Levy and all of the staff for an extraordinary return to live theatre and an excellent season of productions. We also congratulate the amazing Chita Rivera on receiving tonight's Jason Robards Award. Roundabout is the best of the best we are proud to support both theatrical and community outreach excellence.

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BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES, INSPIRED BY OUR PARTNER IN IMPACT: ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY HONORING CHITA RIVERA



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Congratulations to tonight's honoree, the legendary Chita Rivera, and thank you to Sara Bareilles for tonight's performance.

We are thrilled to be a part of Roundabout Theatre Company and congratulate Todd, Julia, Sydney, Steve, Chris, Lane and the entire team on a fantastic 2021-2022 season.

COLLEEN and **JOHN COOK**

OUR HEARTFELT CONGRATULATIONS TO **CHITA**, AND TO **ROUNDABOUT**.

INCOMPARABLE IRREPLACEABLE

WITH ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION,
MICHAEL, LAUREN
AND THE ENTIRE DODGER FAMILY



2



The Durst Organization is pleased to join Roundabout Theatre Company in honoring

Chita Rivera





Congratulations to Todd Haimes and Tom Tuft on the enduring success of Roundabout, and to Chita Rivera for all that you have given to theatre and society.

MARGIE and ROY FURMAN



Congratulations to Roundabout Theatre Company on a triumphant return to live performances this season. I am honored to be a part of the extraordinary and dedicated Board of Directors and the talented and energetic team at Roundabout, powerfully led by Todd and Julia. I look forward to being a part of Roundabout's future as it continues to grow and thrive.

SYLVIA GOLDEN

We Proudly Support
Roundabout Theatre Company
and the 2022 Gala



Thank you, Todd, Sydney, Steve, Chris, Julia and the entire company for all of your dedication and hard work to bring live performances back to Roundabout's stages. Congratulations on a fantastic season.

STEPHANIE and RON KRAMER

Congratulations to the legendary Chita Rivera on her most deserving recognition tonight! And congratulations to Roundabout on a successful return to live theatre.

We are very proud to be sponsoring tonight's spectacular performance by Sara Bareilles.

DR. TAYLOR W LAWRENCE and DR. RYAN P SHELHAMER

Cheers to tonight's honoree
Chita Rivera on her many
contributions to the theatre,
and to Roundabout
on another wonderful season!

GINA MARIA LEONETTI



The Local 764 IATSE Officer's,
Executive Board and Membership
congratulate and honor
Chita Rivera
for her extraordinary contributions
to the theatrical community.

The Membership and Executive Board of Make-up Artists & Hair Stylist Local 798, IATSE



Congratulates the Roundabout Theatre Company Honoree Chita Rivera

The Executive Board of Local 798

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Congratulations, Chita Rivera, on receiving the Jason Robards Award for Excellence in Theatre.

Thank you for being a trailblazing, prolific artist and inspiration.

Both you and Sara Bareilles exemplify the power of women on stage.



Sax LLP

is proud to support

Roundabout Theatre Company

and applaud

Chita Rivera

for her tireless dedication to the organization.

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Congratulations to the entire Roundabout Theatre team for creating new programming to broaden the talent, voices and audiences for American theatre, and for far-reaching education programming in New York City schools at a time when arts education is critical. Special thanks to Todd Haimes and Julia Levy, as well as board leaders Tom Tuft and Kitty Patterson Kempner, for their vision and hard work. And thank you to the legendary Chita Rivera for being such a good friend to Roundabout as we return to live theatre.

JENNIFER AND OWEN THOMAS

Congratulations to Roundabout!

Paul and I are so honored to be part of this Fabulous organization!!!

With love and gratitude,

FRAN and PAUL TURNER

We congratulate tonight's honoree and dear friend to Roundabout: the legendary Chita Rivera for her remarkable contributions and dedication to the theatre.

We applaud Todd, Julia, and the Roundabout family for their leadership and visionary commitment to producing powerful, inclusive and boundary-pushing theatre, and building transformational education experiences that pave the way for the future.

TOM and DIANE TUFT



we proudly support

ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

and congratulate

CHITA RIVERA

ON HER 2022 GALA HONOR





NEDERLANDER ORGANIZATION

WE APPLAUD ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

FOR YOUR

EXTRAORDINARY WORK

AND SALUTE

CHITA RIVERA

JAMES L. NEDERLANDER
PRESIDENT

NICK SCANDALIOS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT