



Jason Loewith
Artistic Director

Debbie Ellinghaus
Managing Director

Olney Theatre Center produces and curates theatrical performance for the diverse audiences in our community, and educates, learns from, supports and inspires a more inclusive generation of theatre-makers. In a typical year, we engage up to 120,000 Marylanders and individuals from across the nation through acclaimed productions of plays and musicals and curated presentations, including music, dance, film, and more. The COVID-19 pandemic and local restrictions on gathering, though, have shut Olney Theatre's doors to the public since March 2020.

Thanks to the financial support of the Maryland State Arts Council, which also helps foster private donations each year, we have adapted in the face of this crisis. In our 2020-21 Season, we have engaged tens of thousands of Marylanders (and attracted more than 98,000 views online) through digital programs like our current [Signal Boost](#) and [Olney Home Hour Series](#). Our free virtual classes this season, offered during school hours and after school, have reached more than 1,000 Maryland students as they learn from home. These programs inspire and connect residents of all ages during this time of isolation.

In September, our recording of Stephen Karam's *The Humans* became a New York Times "Critic's Pick" and drew responses like the following:

The performances were all excellent...not a weak one in the cast. But, most of all, your ability to present it virtually, "Zoomed", and still evoke the atmosphere of the play, to enable the audience to feel that the people are together on stage connecting face to face with each other is amazing. Thank you for this opportunity to experience this work of art.

Though we have not been able to gather in person, we have continued to respond to the challenges faced by Maryland and the nation. **In October, the Maryland State Arts Council enhanced our ability to support and amplify Black, Indigenous, and other artists of color as they explored the pillars of social justice in response to the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and other Black individuals.** *Just Arts: A Celebration of Art and Activism* examined issues of equity, participation, rights, and access in the weeks leading up to the important November election. The digital series featured dozens of BIPOC artists and drew more than 12,000 views.

And *Just Arts* episodes may still be viewed by the public:

- [Equity](#)
- [Participation](#)
- [Rights](#)
- [Access](#)

Over the years, the Maryland State Arts Council has helped Olney Theatre raise its artistic bar and inspire tens of thousands of Marylanders. In FY22, the Council will play a key role as we face the challenge of returning to live, indoor performance following the COVID-19 pandemic.