



# WAM theatre

## 2023 Annual Report

WAM Theatre envisions a world where women and girls have equal opportunities and equal access to learning, earning, expression, and aspiration.

WAM's mission is to create professional theatre that centers the stories of people who identify as women and to use that art as activism to support opportunities for women and girls.

WAM pursues its mission by supporting storytelling of women's lives through theatre, providing not only the message but also the means for other organizations to continue to transform the lives of women and girls everywhere.

# WAM Where Arts & Activism Meet

April 2024

Dear Friends,

In 2023, WAM Theatre underwent a process of deep reflection when Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven decided to pursue new avenues for creative and professional fulfillment.

For over 14 years, WAM Theatre produced critically-acclaimed storytelling and innovative theatrical productions that centered women and girls. During that time, we presented more than 60 stories and donated over \$100,000 to community-based organizations who work tirelessly at the intersection of gender and racial justice to provide access to safety, health, education, creative expression, and financial freedom for all.

The dream of a place called WAM was formulated by Kristen van Ginhoven and Leigh Strimbeck, and the company's social impact over time is a result of collaborative vision, team effort, resource sharing, and partnership. WAM at its best moves away from power-play towards dynamic empowerment. We shift hierarchical structures and inspire new creative habits. We see the benefits of reciprocity, solidarity, accountability, and co-leadership.



From this period of reflection and the articulation of our three-year strategic plan, WAM emerged with a resounding commitment to deepen our shared leadership model across our staff & board to advance our equitable, collective, and transparent decision making practices. WAM's Board is now co-led by our Board Presidents Erica Barreto and Toni Buckley; Genée Coreno (Artistic Director) and Molly Merrihew (Managing Director) are at the helm of the organization guiding our Team. We stand in partnership with our staff, board, and wider community to call in this next chapter.

As WAM's leadership team, we are committed to cultivating creative belonging and generating new ecosystems where bold and rigorous women-centered theater-making continues to thrive, while building upon the legacy of activism established in WAM's first 15 years. We truly believe by harnessing the power of storytelling and community programming, we will improve the lives of girls and women here in Western MA—where gender bias and discrimination continues to impact our ability to flourish and thrive.

## WAM BOARD

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## WAM TEAM

**Genée Coreno**  
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**Molly Merrihew**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR

**Talya Kingston**  
ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**Maizy Scarpa**  
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

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# WAM 2023 Performance Season



In the spring of 2023, WAM Theatre and Berkshire Theatre Group came together for a special co-production of ***What The Constitution Means to Me*** by Heidi Schreck, directed by WAM's former Producing Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven. The performances played to critical acclaim and sold-out houses with three additional shows added to the run. Two-time Tony Award-nominated Broadway actor and local favorite Kate Baldwin played the role of Heidi and made her WAM debut.

*“Absolutely important theater for all ages to see and to discuss—regardless of right, left, or middle.”*

- Audience Member, *What The Constitution Means to Me*

The summer was welcomed by the return of WAM's **Fresh Takes Play Reading Series**. Fresh Takes presented new works by women and explored the complex and intersectional identities that make up contemporary America: identities that people project onto us, the ones that are handed down to us, and the ones we decide ourselves. Performed on Sundays in July at The Mount in Lenox, the plays included ***hollow roots*** by Christina Anderson, ***Port of Entry*** by Talya Kingston, and ***In Her Bones*** by Jessica Kahkoska.



In the fall, WAM produced a special ***Cabaret Event: Me and the Sky*** at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare & Company. The special evening of empowering Broadway hits that focused on women's stories was co-created and directed by WAM Associate Artistic Director Talya Kingston and Pioneer Valley-based theatre artist and musician Kyle Boatwright.

Throughout the season, WAM provided equitable paid work to more than 50+ diverse theatre artists, creatives, and arts administrators who continue to be impacted by the ripple effects of the pandemic.

In 2023, we were proud to expand accessible ticketing options, caregiver stipends (for auditions, rehearsals, performances and workshops), WAM's community engagement programs, and to grow our equitable pay initiatives.

Finally, our biggest undertaking of 2023 was the **leadership transition of Co-Founder and Producing Artistic Director Kristen van Ginhoven** and the search for our next artistic leader. WAM's Team, Board, leadership, and stakeholders worked diligently to create a thoughtful and strategic process for succession and set the stage for our next chapter of growth, honoring the legacy and vision of Kristen's tenure. We're thrilled by the recent announcement of Genée Coreno as Artistic Director guiding WAM's artistic vision. Thank YOU to our community for being on this journey with us.



# WAM Community Engagement

Community Engagement is a central part of WAM Theatre's activist mission. In 2023, we welcomed Maizy Broderick Scarpa to the role of Director of Community Engagement, and facilitated the following programming:

- **Teen Ensemble:** Over spring break, the Teen Ensemble embarked on a creative project that valued process over product. Together they explored individual self-expression, community building, and social emotional learning through theatre games and activities.
- **Elder Ensemble:** Local women ages 65+ fostered deep connections while exploring themes of autonomy and freedom through devised theatre.
- **Free Community Workshops and Story Circles:** Last autumn, the public was invited to gather online and at WAM's Creative Hub to experience the process of devising theatre. Community members (new and returning!) were welcomed to WAM, where they shared ideas, dreams, and imaginings, collectively envisioning a better tomorrow.
- **Arts Integration Professional Development Workshop:** WAM Teaching Artists shared activities and tools to bring lessons alive through monologue-writing with public school teachers. The workshop was held at Tanglewood, as part of BERK12/BCAN's County-Wide Professional Development Day.
- **Improved accessibility initiatives:** Over the past season, we have continued to expand initiatives aimed at reducing barriers and improving access for WAM audiences, audiences, and community members. This includes expanding financially accessible ticketing options; expanding caregiver stipends which can be used by audience and artists for auditions, rehearsals, performances and workshops; continuing to work toward even more equitable pay for all; and growing our free Community Engagement offerings.



## WAM 2023 Recipient

Since 2010, in fulfillment of WAM's mission, WAM has selected an organization/s to donate a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales from its main stage production. Together we've donated over \$100,000 to organizations working on the front lines for women and girls- providing access to safety, health, education, creative expression, and financial freedom.

In alignment with our mission to empower women and girls in 2023, **we donated \$5,000** along with a collection of household supplies, to the **Elizabeth Freeman Center**, which provides lifesaving help to survivors of domestic and sexual violence here in the Berkshires.



*“We are honored to be the recipient of a portion of WAM’s proceeds for What the Constitution Means to Me,” Executive Director Janis Broderick said. “Elizabeth Freeman Center envisions a community free from domestic and sexual violence in which all people live in safety and justice with dignity, and we are fortunate to be able to do this work with the support of great community partners like WAM and Berkshire Theatre Group.”*



The Elizabeth Freeman Center provides lifesaving, life renewing hope, help, and healing to survivors of domestic, dating, and sexual violence and their families of Berkshire County. They have a 24/7 toll-free hotline number (1-866-401-2425), offices in North Adams, Pittsfield and Great Barrington, staff available in four county courts, two police stations, and Berkshire County Kids' Place. Promoting social justice and working to end all forms of oppression are essential to their work. Each year, the Elizabeth Freeman Center reaches 5,000 people throughout Berkshire County.

## WAM THEATRE, INC. 2023 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### INCOME

#### Contributed Income

Corporate Support	\$48,397
Foundations & Government	\$155,675
Individual Support	\$238,153
<b>Total Contributed Income</b>	<b>\$442,225</b>

#### Earned Income

Ticket Sales	\$51,366
Other Earned Income	\$15,206
<b>Total Earned Income</b>	<b>\$66,572</b>

**Total In-Kind Donations**      **\$14,923**

**TOTAL INCOME**      **\$523,720**

### EXPENSES

Contract Services/Professional Fees	\$64,463
Production Costs	\$58,147
Administration	\$72,948
Salaries & Benefits	\$324,324
Donations to Organizations	\$5,305

**TOTAL EXPENSES**      **\$523,763**  
**2023**      **-\$43**

### ASSETS

Bank Accounts	\$220,164
Current Assets	\$38,140
Accounts Receivable	\$78,845
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$337,149</b>

### LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities	\$23,277
Long-Term Liabilities	\$209,684
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$232,961</b>



To mark WAM's 15th Anniversary Season, Genée Coreno (Artistic Director) and Molly Merrihew (Managing Director) have launched The Vision Giving Circle.

The Vision Giving Circle unites philanthropists, strategists, business leaders, thought partners, and allies who share a deep commitment to improving the lives of women and girls, in Western Massachusetts and beyond, through storytelling & theater arts.

Join the movers, shakers, and change-makers who are investing in WAM's long-term growth, mission of arts-activism, and vision for a world where women and girls have equal opportunities and equal access to learning, earning, creative expression, and aspiration.

WAM gratefully acknowledges the generosity of the following individuals, foundations, sponsors, and government agencies that make our work possible.

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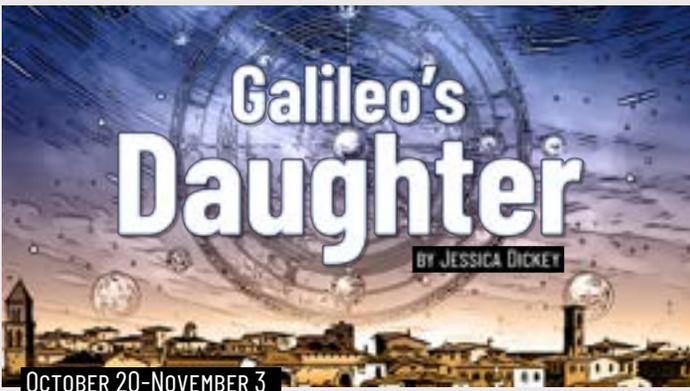
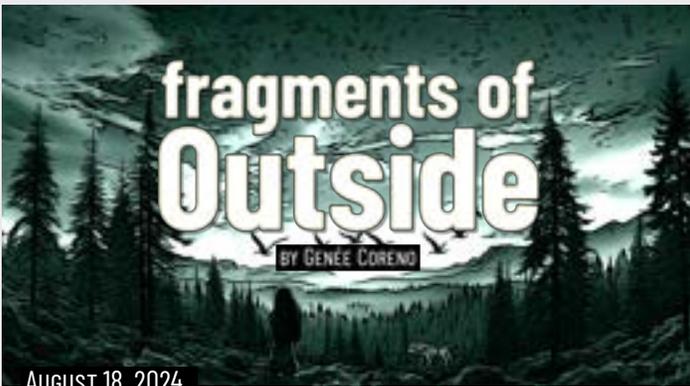
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