



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Aili Huber

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From the Board President

What a season! We set some ambitious goals in 2025. We experimented with ways to increase our audience capacity, expand our accessibility initiatives and partner with community in new ways. We continued and deepened our commitment to creating and maintaining a radically welcoming environment for each artist that graced our porch-stage with their craft. How satisfying, inspiring and humbling to have met and exceeded so many of those goals. Our fourth season felt like a season of sinking deeper roots in what Silk Moth Stage is— a small professional theatre committed to producing ‘new classics’ that offer the highest truths, universally told, with healing powers.

On behalf of the Silk Moth Stage Board, I’m pleased to share with you our 2025 Annual Report and express my gratitude for trusting us to continue to create meaningful, unique theatre experiences in the Shenandoah Valley.

With gratitude,
Holly Labbe
Board President
Silk Moth Stage





Exciting Stats:

- In 2024, our entire budget was around \$23,500. In 2025, we **paid nearly \$24,000 directly to artists.**
- We brought artists and activists from all over the country to strategize about creating better theater workplaces.
- We sold our 1000th ticket!
- Around 1/3 of our audience came from outside of the central Shenandoah Valley.

From the Artistic Director

As our 2025 season drew to a close, my colleagues, friends, and family regularly wanted to know how I felt about it. This is a common question—at the end of our first season, in 2022, I told them that I felt like starting a theater was the worst idea I ever had, except when I felt like it was the best idea I ever had.

This year, though, I don't have any ambivalence. This season stretched us and we flourished into it. The artistry in this year's productions felt like seeing our vision coming true. *The Last Wide Open* is a great example of the kind of story we are trying to tell—although one of the main characters is an immigrant, it's not a play *about immigration*. Playwright Monica Flory, who came to see 2022's *Give Us Good*, honored us with the gift of *The Wanting Forest*, a script inspired by our stage and our staging. It captures another piece of what Silk Moth is, by using magic and surprise to explore a nearly universal experience.

Thanks to an unexpectedly successful grant season, we developed a workshop program that created new connections with local schools while providing them with resources for a different kind of storytelling.

The Radical Welcome Symposium is one of the best things I have ever done, and made me realize how much momentum is building around creating a theater industry that has space for everyone's stories.

We hope you will be part of our story as we continue to dream bigger.

As ever,
Aili Huber
Artistic Director
Silk Moth Stage

Mission, Vision, Values

Mission Statement

Silk Moth Stage produces events with new classics at the center. Our productions are place-based, artist-centered, and audience-connected.

As a starting point, we borrow Shakespeare and Company's definition of the classics: *The highest truths, universally told, with healing powers.*

Vision

We create artisanal theater—small batch, home-grown, high-quality. Every year, we deepen the quality of the art we share with our audiences and expand our ability to support our artists in doing their most vibrant and full work.

Values

Silk Moth Stage is a small professional company. We expect artists to behave in accordance with generally accepted standards of professional behavior, which includes respecting other artists, challenging oneself to grow in one's art, and creating a collaborative environment where we can all push ourselves to take risks.

We invite people to reconsider what a theater experience can be. In a Silk Moth Stage play, actors work in an outdoor environment. They make contact with the audience directly. The audience surrounds the performance space. Before and after the show, audience and actors connect to talk about our shared experience of story creation. At Silk Moth, the audience is a crucial piece of the work.

We are creating accessible opportunities for professional artists to do their best work, and for local audiences to experience high-quality performances. Through access initiatives, we invite people to bring their whole selves to the process by inviting them to share what they need, and finding creative ways to meet those needs. Our accessibility initiatives address barriers of geography, economics, disability, and prejudice.



Special thanks

We are so grateful to everyone who makes Silk Moth Stage possible. To Tiffany Showalter, whose photographs capture the magic (except as noted, all photos in this report are hers). To our accessibility team: Kim Newton, Melissa Black, Kristine Long, and Emily Stemper. To the musicians from Lua Project, blue stone sky, and Juniper Tree, who set the stage. To the directors who shaped this year's performances: Kelsey Harrison, Jeremy Nafziger, Aili Huber, Jim Clemens, and Holly Labbe. To Elizabeth Wislar and Heidi Jablonski for the beautiful costumes. To all-star intern Laine Anthony for her inestimable support. To Bridgewater College and the Huber family for in-kind donations of space and resources. To Monica Flory and Audrey Cefaly for their words.

To all the artists: Thank you for helping create a home.



Negotiations and Love Songs

Our May show was *The Last Wide Open*, by Audrey Cefaly. One reason we selected it was because it felt like the kind of story (minus the time loop) that could be happening right now, in a restaurant kitchen in Harrisonburg. In this sliding-doors rom-com, restaurant workers Lina and Roberto struggle to connect across barriers of language, circumstance, and time. Roberto's problem is not that he's from another country. It's that "I love you" is one of the hardest phrases to say in any language.

This play was unfortunately more timely than we realized when we selected it. We appreciated dramaturgical support from New Bridges Immigrant Resource Center, which also shared information before shows. We hope that Roberto and Lina's love story helped create a human, and humane window into the ordinary lives of people in our community.

"What a fantastic show!"
—Tommie Sue Anthony



The Last Wide Open



Negotiations and Love Songs

The Wanting Forest, written for Silk Moth Stage by Monica Flory, is a fairy tale about growing up, leaving home, blessings, curses, and love. It's a story for anyone who has ever been or had a mother.

This show allowed us to play with movement in a new way. Actors used their bodies and simple objects—a hula hoop, bamboo, planks, silks—to create an ocean, mountains, a ship at sea, a journey through unfamiliar territory.

[I was] completely mesmerized by the beauty of this show. Every aspect of it was so thoughtfully done...From the moment you walk to the space you can feel the love and care that was taken with this piece...Go into the forest. Do it.
—Lesley Larsen,
Artistic Director at the Wayne Theatre



The Wanting Forest



Negotiations and Love Songs

In addition to producing two musicals, we continued our tradition of an hour of preshow music and picnics. Thanks to the Touring Artist Grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, we were able to bring in the Mexilachian fusion band Lua Project to play with us before performances of *The Last Wide Open*.

Audiences for *The Wanting Forest* enjoyed songs from Juniper Tree and blue stone sky.

We love how live music sets the scene; each unique musician or ensemble creates a different atmosphere. The play might be the same from one night to another, but audiences who see multiple performances with different musicians remark that the mood shifts noticeably from one to another.

R: Lua Project pals Peter Richardson and Justin Esposito performing on a spring evening. Photo by Tiffany Showalter Photography.



L: Juniper Tree playing original odes to the trees in September. Photo by audience member Elaine Kraft Pfiel.

Environmental Devising Workshops

Thanks to generous grants from the Arts Council of the Valley, the Puffin Foundation, and the Virginia Commission for the Arts, we were able to partner with local schools and libraries to lead workshops on “environmental devising”—the type of imagination-driven work we do to set the scene at Silk Moth Stage.

We taught 50 elementary students at the Massanutten Regional Library on a Saturday afternoon. After that, our smaller classes at middle school, high school, and college levels felt calm. In addition to the library, we worked with students and teachers at Wilbur Pence Middle School, Eastern Mennonite High School, Turner Ashby High School, East Rockingham High School, and Bridgewater College, serving 147 students and 58 parents and teachers.

Many of the students and families who attended the workshops joined us for *The Wanting Forest* to see how we used environmental devising to create the woods, the sea, the shore, and the mountaintop.

We also expanded our usher pool when several TAHS students volunteered to assist our guests.

We do not expect workshops to be a frequent offering, as there are many other organizations in the community that excel in arts education. That said, we enjoyed the connections we made with students, teachers, and parents, and the chance to share our particular style of storytelling.

Turner Ashby students share their devised piece with each other. Photo by Aili Huber.



Accessibility

At Silk Moth Stage, accessibility is a foundational principle. With 15% of our performances interpreted in American Sign Language, ⅓ presented with virtual captioning, and 15% enhanced with audio description (an accommodation for people who are blind or have low vision), we far exceed other theaters in this area. We always have an accessible restroom. All of our shows are “sensory friendly,” and we have a social story, reviewed by an expert in neurodivergence access, to help folks prepare to see a show here. You can learn more about our accessibility initiatives on the “access” page on our website.

We’re becoming a resource for other organizations when they need to find an ASL interpreter or audio describer. We have paid for one staff member to get trained and certified in audio description, and would like to train one more.

Additionally, we focus on accessibility for artists. Although many theaters have accessible areas for audience members, few take the same care with artists, especially performers. We have a line item in every show budget that is reserved for artist access. In recent years, that has helped to pay for childcare support and family-friendly travel accommodations for out-of-town artists. Any unused accessibility funds carry over each year, building a capital fund to accommodate more significant needs that may arise in the future; for example, our stage is obviously not accessible for a wheelchair user, but we currently have set aside enough capital to build a temporary ramp if an artist we hired needed that kind of support.

These efforts sometimes stretch our budget. **We are seeking a named sponsor to help us maintain and expand these accessibility offerings, at a level of \$1300 for both shows in our 2026 season, or \$750 for one show.**



Artistic Associate Heidi Jablonski runs the virtual captions for a performance of The Last Wide Open.

Silk Moth Stage has been nothing but committed to enriching our community through accessible artistic programming. They integrate artistic excellence with cultural inclusivity by offering workshops, performances, and exhibitions designed to engage and inspire diverse audiences. The sustainability efforts of this organization are amazing—from hiring local actors to utilizing existing resources and tools and local musicians to enhance the performances.

—Melissa Black, ASL interpreter



ASL interpreter Melissa Black signs during a performance of *The Last Wide Open*. Photo by Aili Huber.

The Radical Welcome Symposium

Silk Moth Stage began, in part, as an experiment in treating artists well. Artistic Director Aili Huber has spent the last decade working as an advocate for excellent workplace practices in theaters of all sizes. Her framework of policy and practice, “Take 5,” is used in theaters of all sizes, from small community theaters to large professional companies. Take 5 is now part of the required curriculum for students studying directing at Carnegie Mellon University. Aili regularly shares this work at national and international theater conferences. However, people who haven’t seen it in action tend to insist that treating artists fairly can’t be done, or that it would require a tremendous budget to accomplish. At Silk Moth Stage, we’re proving what is possible on a budget that would be a rounding error at many theaters.

Take 5 draws on tools from many streams of artist advocacy, from disability access to pay equity to caregiver access to intimacy and consent work to racial equity to mental health awareness, and more.

The Radical Welcome Symposium called together activists working in all of these movements, from theaters of all sizes, from all over the country, to spend three days dreaming, sharing, and planning. The Radical Welcome Movement is a broad coalition, distinct from Take 5, which is a tool for creating radically welcoming workplaces.

We partnered with the Wayne Theatre, Mary Baldwin University’s Shakespeare and Performance MFA program, Theatre at Bridgewater College, and the American Shakespeare Center to host these artists for workshops, discussions, meals, and plays. Attendees enjoyed performances of *Midsummer Night’s Dream* at the Wayne, *The Last Wide Open* at Silk Moth Stage, and *Sense and Sensibility* at the American Shakespeare Center.

The movement is only beginning. We hope to host a larger gathering some time in 2027, including not just those who are actively practicing radical welcome as policy, but those who are curious to learn more. To hear about future gatherings and access resources, visit radical-welcome.org and join the mailing list.



In May, I was fortunate enough to attend the Radical Welcome Symposium, created and led by Aili Huber of Silk Moth Stage. The experience was genuinely energizing, being in a room full of theatre makers from across the country who share a commitment to reimagining our practices through radical hospitality and inclusivity.

Aili's leadership in shaping this event was superb in large part because of her collaborative and welcoming approach to the event itself. She wove together a network of partnerships and community relationships that grounded the symposium in the local community while including a group of us from around the country. That integration of relationships was led by example, building theatre that welcomes rather than excludes, that collaborates rather than competes.

What struck me most was how seamlessly Silk Moth Stage positioned the symposium both as conversation and as practice—a living laboratory for what "radical welcome" might look like in real time. Every interaction, from formal panels to casual meals, became an experiment in generosity, listening, and belonging.

The Radical Welcome Symposium did not retreat from challenges presented to the industry; it was one step into reimagining its future. The commitment of Silk Moth Stage to continuing this work will keep shaping how our field evolves, not only in the stories we tell but how we choose to make them together.

—Andrew Roblyer, MFA, who traveled from Texas to join the Symposium



Statement of Financial Position

Silk Moth Stage enjoys strong support from our community. You show up for us by buying tickets, telling your friends about us, donating to our general fund, hosting our guest artists, and sporting our stylish shirts. We received financial support from 77 unique donors. While several contributors gave over \$200, the most common amount was \$10. Every gift counts, and we are honored to receive support from our community.

We also want to note that in normal years, ticket sales make up about a third of our income. This year, we received an unusual level of grant support, and most of the cost of the Radical Welcome Symposium was covered by in-kind donations of space and materials from our partner theaters, which shifted our relative income streams significantly.

In 2025, we received grant support from the Arts Council of the Valley, the Virginia Commission for the Arts, the Puffin Foundation, The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, and the Michael Alexiou Family Fund.

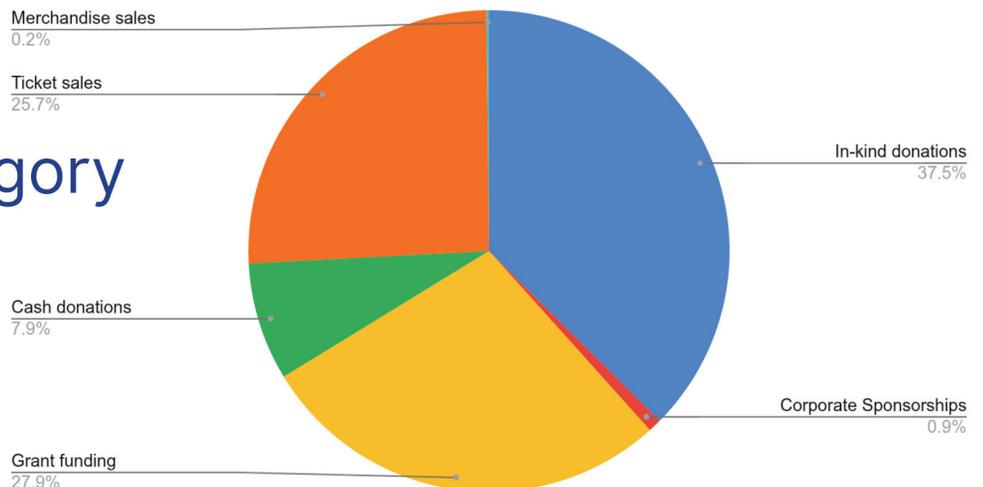
Our strongest fundraising event of the year was the Great Community Give, where we raised over \$3600 in one day! Look for us in next year’s GCG, which is April 22.

We also received corporate sponsorship from LD&B Insurance and Financial Services and Stacie Dietz Dentistry. Are you involved with a business that would like to make a tax-deductible contribution to the arts? Check out [our sponsorship page](#) for details.

Thanks to the community’s commitment to high-quality theater, we were able to increase artist pay over last season, welcome people who might not otherwise have access to live theater, and improve our cash reserve, ensuring that we will be able to pay artists even when the weather cancels our performances.

Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to support professional theater in Rockingham County.

Income by category



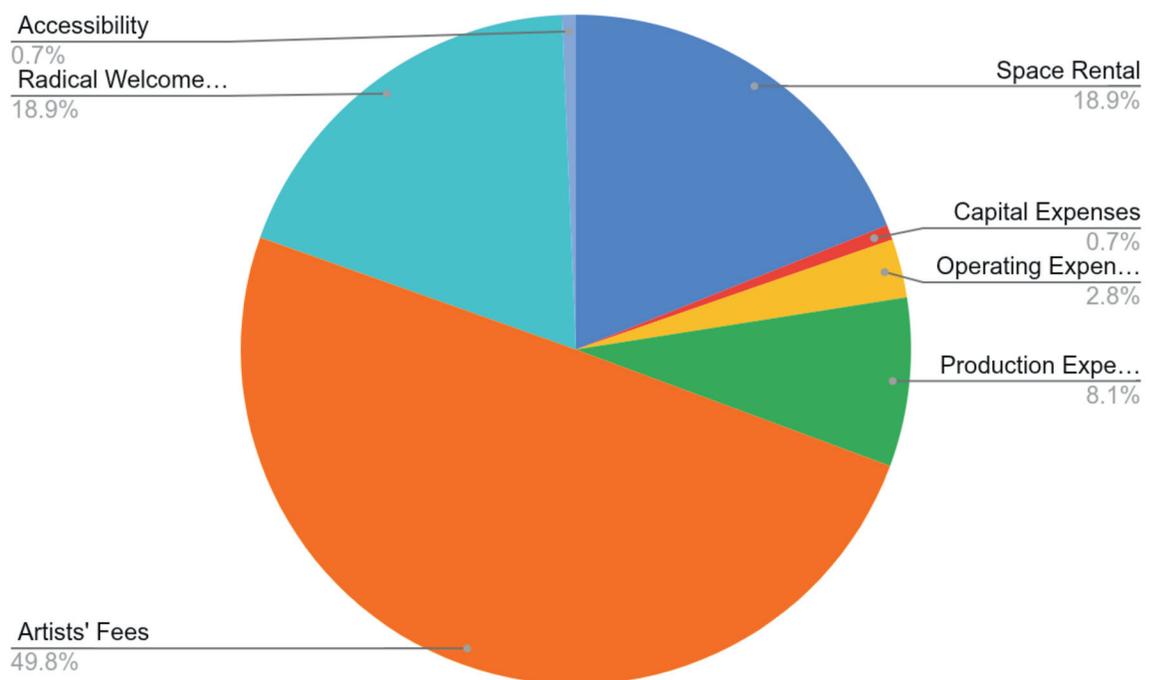
Our expenses are very low, as we don't own much, and are trying to keep it that way. We have strong relationships with area college, high school, and community theaters that generously lend props, set pieces, costumes, and occasionally space. In our 2025 season, we received this type of support from Bridgewater College, the Wayne Theatre, and Mary Baldwin University's Shakespeare and Performance graduate program. We reciprocate by connecting these programs with guest artists for workshops, promoting and supporting their work, and sharing our resources.

Our biggest cost would be space rental, but that is provided as an in-kind donation. This allows us the budget flexibility to create accessibility for audiences and artists.

This year, the Radical Welcome Symposium increased our budget significantly. While we hope to hold future events to promote positive theater workplaces and resource the people creating them, this is not an event that will happen every year.

We believe that budgets are moral documents. Our budget is in line with our values when it prioritizes people over things. One of the many ways we demonstrate our values is by spending our marketing budget in support of other organizations, which helps them as well as increases our name recognition. This year, we donated nearly \$600 worth of show tickets and picnics to silent auctions for other nonprofits and purchased ads in high school musical programs. This year, we will continue donating to other organizations and will place an ad in the musical programs for six area high schools.

Expenses by category



2025 Supporters

Special thanks to all of our 2025 supporters!

Fire (\$500-\$999)

- Anonymous, in honor of Sarah Levine McClelland
- Andy Harbick

Sunset (\$100-\$499)

- Anonymous (2)
- Lisa Sheppard
- Laura Carpenter
- Aili Huber
- Wendy Werner
- Heidi Winters Vogel
- Christi Hoover (recurring donor)
- Kate Powers
- Bonnie Mill
- Mary Monts

Picnic (\$50-\$99)

- Anonymous
- Jacob Lester, in memory of Roger Foster
- Dallas Hetrick
- Hannah Hall
- George McCardle
- Mark Facknitz

Picnic (\$50-\$99), cont.

- Melanie Kulas
- Marta Werner
- Nancy Abrams
- Art Stoltzfus
- Colette Hostetler

River (\$25-\$49)

- Anonymous (2)
- Charles Uphaus
- Ranene Ropp
- Adrienne Hooker
- Liz Marin, in honor of Basil Marin
- Patricia Wirth
- Carmen Witmer
- Paul Riner
- Rhoda Derstine
- Jamie Hiner
- Bob Bartlett
- Linda Ruch
- Jason and Amanda Saufley

2025 Supporters

Special thanks to all of our 2025 supporters!

S'more (< \$24)

- Anonymous, in honor of Holly Labbe
- Anonymous, in honor of Handsome George
- Anonymous (6)
- Linda Labbe
- Pam Mandigo
- James Yeboah
- Gary Auerbach
- Kathryn Hallett
- Toby Lumley
- Brevan Heaton
- Nath Vanamour
- Michael Labbe
- Scott Cole
- Holly Labbe
- Kristi Ryba
- Claire Wayman
- Kelsey Harrison
- Alek Petty, in honor of George
- Sam Guilford
- Laine Anthony
- Maria Pichler
- Pier LaFarge
- Nate Brustein
- Rosslyn Selzer

S'more (< \$24), cont.

- Jeffrey Stanton
- Sarah Levine McClelland
- Lori Jones
- Howard Showalter
- Jeremy Nafziger
- Catharine Weiss
- Angelina Molina
- Britney Mongold
- Keith Ross
- Ethan Coleman
- Angela Showalter
- Liana Bayne-Lin
- Jerilyn Monts
- Rebecca Shelly
- Michelle Arciniega
- Lindsey Sitz
- Heidi Jablonski
- Marcella O'Brien
- Silvia Huber
- Heidi Hoover
- Bonnie Morrison
- Kati Ulrich
- Monica Cross
- Petra Huber

Artist Pay

In 2024, our entire budget was just under \$24,000.
In 2025, we paid artists nearly \$24,000.



Why is it important to pay artists?

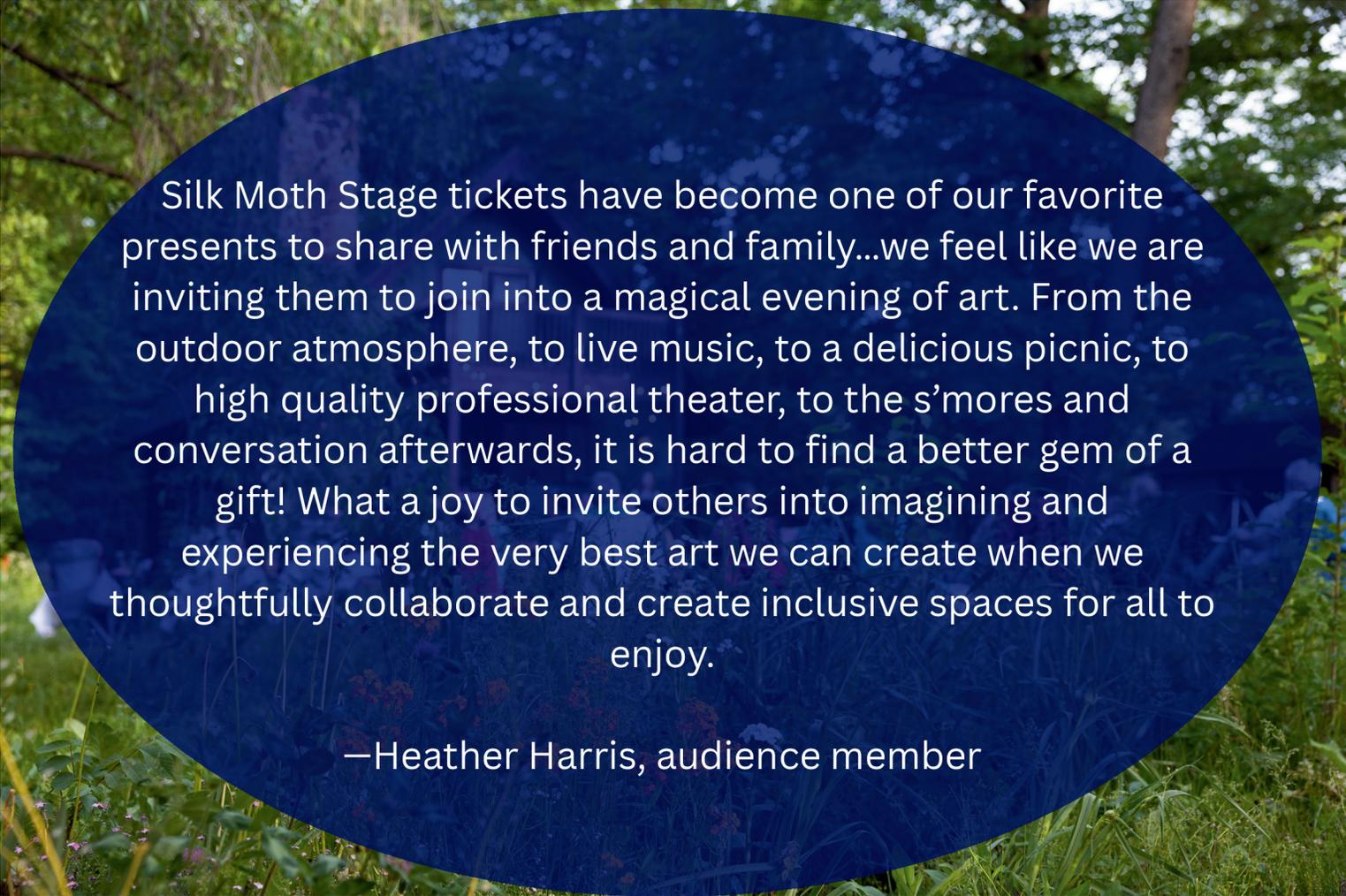
When we pay artists:

- **We honor their work and their training.** The artists we work with are highly skilled. Many of them have terminal degrees in their specialization, or have been doing the work for decades. Paying for expertise is appropriate.
- **We are creating accessibility and equity.** We're not there yet, but we have a plan to increase artist pay every year until it reaches an industry standard level, which we project will happen by our 2027 season. By paying artists fairly, we create opportunities for artists to work, without taking resources from their families. If we do not pay artists, the only people who can afford to make art are those who have trust funds.
- **We are making it possible for local audiences to experience professional-quality art.** Many of our artists have built careers out of living in the Valley and traveling elsewhere to create theater. It's a good business model for life; the cost of living here is relatively low, and they can go where the money is for short periods of time. They live here, but they do their best work in other communities. By creating paid opportunities for them right here, we make their work accessible to their friends and neighbors.

Ticket Sales

Our attendance numbers (including complimentary tickets) increased by 35% from 2024 to 2025, with especially strong growth in student ticket sales. Overall ticket revenue increased by 17.6%, which is consistent with our pattern of 15-20% growth from one year to the next. We continue to offer free tickets to volunteers and those with financial need. We also sold our 1000th ticket this spring!

Additionally, we have astounding numbers of return visitors. Over 40% of people who have seen one Silk Moth show have come back for at least one more. Over a third of patrons who came to *The Last Wide Open* came back for *The Wanting Forest*. These are excellent numbers; the industry benchmark for good repeat business is 25% over two years, for theaters with many more performances per year than we have. Thank you for coming back, and for bringing your friends!



Silk Moth Stage tickets have become one of our favorite presents to share with friends and family...we feel like we are inviting them to join into a magical evening of art. From the outdoor atmosphere, to live music, to a delicious picnic, to high quality professional theater, to the s'mores and conversation afterwards, it is hard to find a better gem of a gift! What a joy to invite others into imagining and experiencing the very best art we can create when we thoughtfully collaborate and create inclusive spaces for all to enjoy.

—Heather Harris, audience member

Investing in Artists: Playwrights

Last year, our leadership team was in conversation about how every production becomes the center of the universe for the director, designers, and actors. But after the first couple of productions, they don't matter in the same way to the playwright. The plays go off into the world on their own, sometimes sending a postcard back home.

We decided that we wanted to *mostly* do productions that would matter to the playwrights as much as they do to the rest of the creative team. We wanted to work with playwrights who were excited about Silk Moth. We wanted to support their careers and development.

This year, that decision paid dividends we are still trying to sort out. Both of the playwrights we worked with were quick to answer our questions and offer thoughts as we adapted the work to our specific environment. They both found ways to be with us for the shows—Audrey Cefaly traveling from Baltimore, Monica Flory joining us from Philadelphia. Their feedback, encouragement, and involvement enrich the productions immeasurably. Treating playwrights as full collaborators has helped us grow into the theater we want to be.



Investing in Artists: Playwrights

A note from Monica Flory

I'm absolutely thrilled that Silk Moth produced my play, *The Wanting Forest*, in September 2025. Aili and company gave me the chance to have a beautifully-produced professional production outside of my home city, allowing for a kind of experimental joy I have rarely experienced.

Their production of this play with music was gorgeous and well-crafted; directed creatively for the thrust space, with passionate performances and the most wildly beautiful, layered costumes from reclaimed textiles. By the final number, all of us in the audience had fallen a little more in love with theater, and with our fellow community members. It was enlightening to have access to a new audience to experience their reactions to the work.

I'm grateful that I got the chance to widen my circle of creative colleagues through Silk Moth. These collaborators gave me new perspectives on the play, as well as the new worlds of their own work to explore. Our music director helped me to reformat the play's songs; the work he did on the sheet music will enhance the next production. Having the world premiere of the show at Silk Moth will make the show more marketable and more polished for the next production.

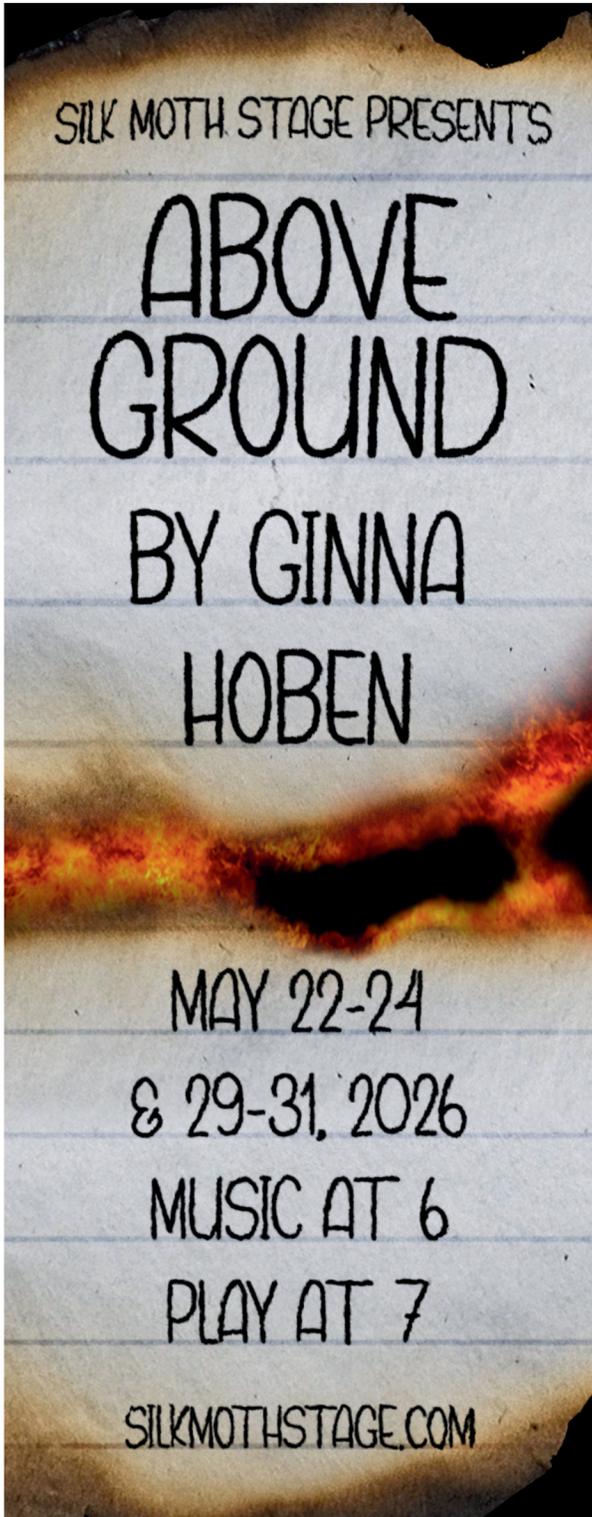
Silk Moth's equal commitment to both artistic excellence and treating collaborators like gold made this the kind of experience that playwrights dream of. It's wonderful to be certain that not only did work on my play not cause harm; in some cases, it helped to heal wounds left from other rehearsal experiences. When Aili jokingly asks, "What if theater, but not terrible?" a whole community laughs and nods in recognition.

I would unequivocally recommend this experience to another playwright; indeed, working with Silk Moth has been one of the heady highlights of my professional career. May they make beautiful and thoughtful work forever and ever...



Apocalypses Great and Small

Above Ground



Our spring show is the regional premiere of *Above Ground*, by Ginna Hoben. *Above Ground* is an examination of death, anxiety, and the infinite mark left by social media (or any media) activity– a comedy! In 1995, Virginia made a “dead sister pledge” to *carpe diem*. At the same time, she began a practice of daily writing. *Above Ground* uncovers her decades of journal entries as she investigates her choices in the years following her sister’s fatal car accident. Did she seize the day ...?

Local theater fans will remember Ginna Hoben's *The Twelve Dates of Christmas*, performed frequently at the American Shakespeare Center. She is also a regular performer there, creating 38 roles in 33 productions.

Heidi Winters Vogel directed the acclaimed *Artemisia's Intent* in 2023. Her husband and partner in art, David Vogel, was the set designer for *Artemisia's Intent*. We are thrilled to have them back with us.

Performances will take place on May 22-24 and 29-31, 2026.

Apocalypses Great and Small

Human Museum

Our fall show is Miyoko Conley's *Human Museum*. As robots on Earth finalize a museum exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of humanity's extinction, an unexpected radio transmission disrupts everything they thought they knew. This darkly comic new play delves into our legacy and who will carry it forward.

Artistic director Aili Huber helms this production. Costume designer Rachel Herrick, who created the costumes for *Wonder of Our Stage*, returns to design a very different robot play.

Performances September 11-13 and 18-20, 2026.
Music begins at 5 and the play begins at 6.

2026 Season Supporters

Our 2026 season is supported, in part, by grants from The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County's Earlylynn J Miller Fund for the Arts and the Dr. Michael Alexiou Charitable Fund

We have corporate sponsorship from LD&B Insurance and Financial Services and Stacie Dietz, DDS.



Investing in Artists: Actors

One thing that made *The Wanting Forest* an artistic success was a movement workshop we did over the summer, before rehearsals began. Although some cast members were unavailable due to out-of-town contracts, several cast members met with movement director Holly Labbe for several days to focus on creating a shared movement palette to work from.

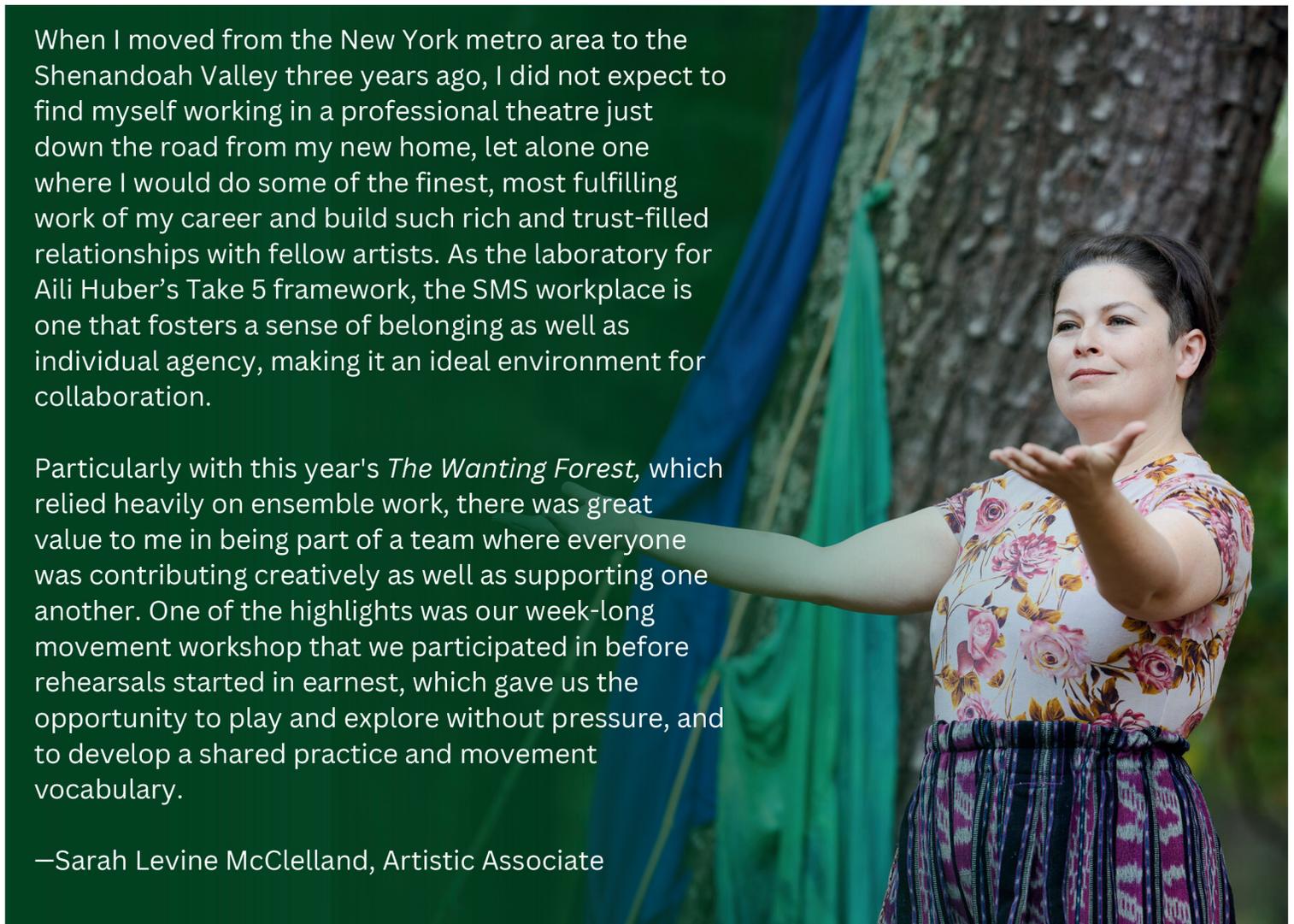
As we move into 2026, we are expanding that work by creating Silk Moth Studio: A series of monthly training sessions, focusing on skills that are particular to our setting and the way we create theater. Open to all actors who have worked on our prior productions, as well as those who will be joining us in 2026, these sessions will be led by experts in movement, voice, audience connection, text and rhetoric, and ensemble-building. We are excited to be able to create this opportunity to deepen the level of the work you see on our stage.

Sponsorship opportunity: We are looking for a sponsor for this program, which will cost us \$2100 this year, in space rentals and instructor fees. Is your business looking for an unusual way to support excellence in the performing arts? More information on [our sponsorship page](#).

When I moved from the New York metro area to the Shenandoah Valley three years ago, I did not expect to find myself working in a professional theatre just down the road from my new home, let alone one where I would do some of the finest, most fulfilling work of my career and build such rich and trust-filled relationships with fellow artists. As the laboratory for Aili Huber's Take 5 framework, the SMS workplace is one that fosters a sense of belonging as well as individual agency, making it an ideal environment for collaboration.

Particularly with this year's *The Wanting Forest*, which relied heavily on ensemble work, there was great value to me in being part of a team where everyone was contributing creatively as well as supporting one another. One of the highlights was our week-long movement workshop that we participated in before rehearsals started in earnest, which gave us the opportunity to play and explore without pressure, and to develop a shared practice and movement vocabulary.

—Sarah Levine McClelland, Artistic Associate



Investing in Artists: Broader Connections

As we grow into our mission, we become more integrated in the national landscape of small, professional theaters. We find ways to collaborate with theaters in our region and beyond. Our artists work with theaters across the country, and develop those connections over time.

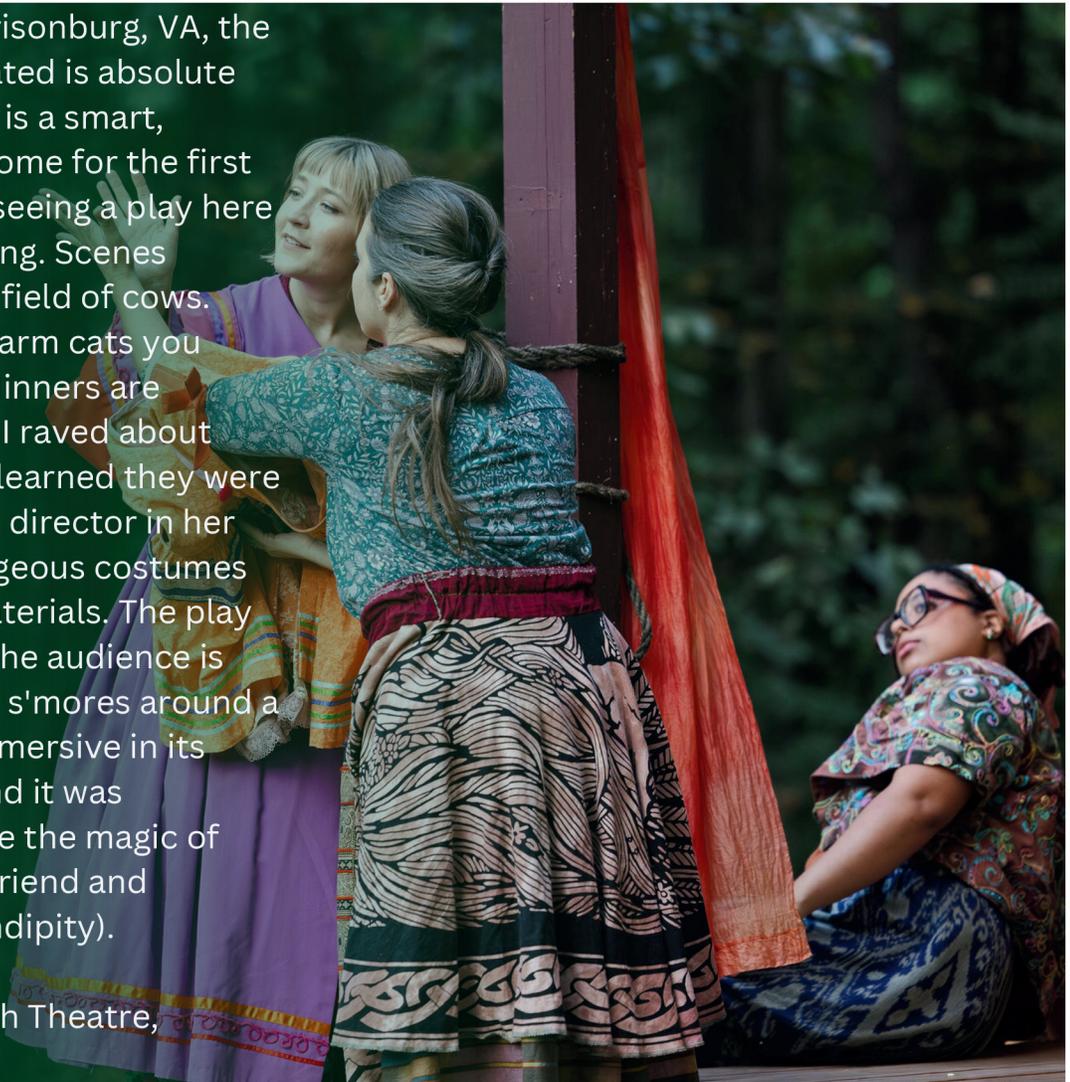
This winter, our artistic director traveled to Newfoundland to share about how our small theater is a leader in creating excellent workplaces, and to challenge larger theaters to reconsider what is possible.

Every year, we receive scripts from playwrights all over the country. We're developing a reputation as a great place to play.

These connections beyond our valley help us stay current on the conversations and challenges our industry is engaging with. They help us bring outside perspectives into our work here, and share our own innovations with people who need them, all over the world.

Thirty minutes outside of Harrisonburg, VA, the experience Aili Huber has created is absolute magic. *THE WANTING FOREST* is a smart, beautiful play about leaving home for the first time. Every single element of seeing a play here is warm, intentional, and inviting. Scenes played out a few yards from a field of cows. Their website introduces the farm cats you might meet. Delicious boxed dinners are available for pre-order and as I raved about how good the pastries were, I learned they were made by the play's movement director in her day job at the bakery. The gorgeous costumes were all made from reused materials. The play ends just as the sun sets and the audience is invited to stay after and enjoy s'mores around a fire pit with the artists. It is immersive in its most honest, organic sense and it was outstanding. (And just to prove the magic of this place, we ran into an old friend and collaborator...there too. Serendipity).

—Jenny McConnell Frederick
Co-Artistic Director, Rorschach Theatre,
Washington, DC



Opportunities for Support



An initiative of The Community Foundation

We had a successful Great Community Give (GCG) in 2025, where we raised over \$3600, which helped us support the expenses and challenges of a season full of music.

This year's focus for GCG is going to be *paying artists*.

We have paid artists well in the past, but this year, we want to improve our organizational stability by raising 20% of our expected artist fees, accessibility initiatives, and travel costs during Great Community Give, before we begin performances. That's going to be about \$4000.

Raising this money early in our season will help us maintain our commitment to paying artists for their work, even when shows are canceled for weather. **Did you know that very few outdoor theaters structure payment this way?**

Weather-based pay makes budgeting impossible. We create stability for working artists by ensuring their pay, even if we have a monsoon.

We welcome your support of our 2026 season on April 22!

While you're there, take time to support other non-profits in our area. These organizations make Harrisonburg and Rockingham County an extraordinary place to live.

Opportunities for Support

Recurring Donations

Did you know that it is simple and easy to set up recurring monthly donations? You might not miss a few dollars each month, but they would make a difference for us. If every person who has ever seen a Silk Moth show made a \$5 monthly donation, we could cover our 2026 budget with \$10,000 to spare.

Corporate Sponsorship

If you would like us to mention your business at every performance to an audience of smart, community-minded, good-looking people, get regular shout-outs in our marketing, and score free tickets, please consider our corporate sponsorship program. Last year, in addition to nearly 200 local audience members, we brought over 150 people to Rockingham County for our shows. They'd love to hear about your business and visit it while they're in town.

We are particularly seeking named sponsorships for our Silk Moth Studio training initiative (\$2100) and our audience accessibility initiative, which includes ASL, audio description, and virtual captioning (\$1300 for both shows, or \$750 for one production).



Thank you!

We could not create Silk Moth Stage without the generous support of our patrons.

Thank you—for coming to shows, for volunteering, for sharing our posts, for funding our initiatives.

We are creating something unique, in and for the Shenandoah Valley.

We can't wait to see you on the lawn.

