



THE UMBRELLA<sup>SM</sup>  
STAGE COMPANY

## THE UMBRELLA ARTS CENTER ANNOUNCES ITS 2025/26 STAGE COMPANY SEASON

**Boston-Area Premiere of Meghan Kennedy's Award-Winning *The Counter***

**Audience Favorites Ilyse Robbins and Scott Edmiston Return Alongside Umbrella  
Directorial Debuts of Najee Brown and Alex Lonati**



CONCORD — May 27, 2025— The Umbrella Stage Company's 2025/26 theater season invites audiences to a vibrant showcase of courage, heart, and hope featuring an award-winning premiere, a revisited classic, and two musicals that celebrate the impact of art.

"I am thrilled to bring this season to life on The Umbrella's stage," says Director of Performing Arts, Brian Boruta. "Each title features deeply moving characters yearning for something bigger, better, or brighter — whether that be dreams, joy, or justice. Their striving reminds us of the impact we can have on each other's lives, the importance of doing what's right, and the power of pursuing something greater. I'm excited to tell these stories with such brilliant new and returning collaborators, and to connect audiences with their work all year long."

The Boston-area premiere of Meghan Kennedy's *The Counter* kicks off the season (9/26-11/9) in the Black Box. Directed by Alex Lonati in her Umbrella debut, this award-winning, deeply human

play about the unlikely connection between a retired firefighter and a diner server who develop a meaningful friendship is full of warmth, courage, and “subtle beauty” (*New York Magazine*). That play will run in rotation with the dynamic ***Tick, Tick... Boom!*** (10/10-11/23), Jonathan Larson's autobiographical rock musical about an aspiring composer questioning his life choices on the eve of his thirtieth birthday. Norton Award-winner Ilyse Robbins (*Lizzie: The Musical*, *The Spitfire Grill*) returns to direct and choreograph this musical “prequel” detailing Larson’s journey that would lead to the Broadway blockbuster, *Rent*.

This winter, three-time Norton-winning director Scott Edmiston (*The Minutes*) helms a thought-provoking new production of ***To Kill A Mockingbird*** (2/27-3/22) that re-examines Harper Lee’s classic story, as dramatized by Christopher Sergel. Driven by an unshakeable moral conviction, local lawyer Atticus defends a black man accused of a terrible crime in a trial that sends violent waves through the community. Through the eyes of Atticus’ young daughter Scout, this timeless and lingering coming-of-age story explores prejudice, compassion, and the courage to do what is right.

Rounding out the season in the Main Stage Theater 144 is the exuberant Broadway musical ***Hairspray*** (4/24-5/17), an inspiring romp for anyone who’s ever been a teen with a dream. Piled bouffant-high with laughter, romance, and Tony Award-winning tunes, and based on John Waters’ cult classic film, the show is directed and choreographed by Najee Brown (choreographer of *The Color Purple*, *The Full Monty*), in his Umbrella directorial debut.

In addition to its Stage Company productions, The Umbrella returns with popular concerts including ***Holiday Pops*** in partnership with Firebird Pops Orchestra (12/12-12/14); two concerts spotlighting emerging artists in partnership with Salt Lick Incubator; and a fourth installment of its exciting series that has featured such Broadway headliners as Laura Benanti, Jeremy Jordan, and Tituss Burgess.

Shows run Thursdays and Fridays at 7:30PM, Saturdays at 8PM and Sundays at 3PM. Select KidCare Show (dates TBA) will allow parents an opportunity to attend matinee performances while their child(ren) ages 5-12 engage in art activities inspired by the show in one of The Umbrella's classrooms with an experienced teacher. The Umbrella is ADA-accessible and a proud partner in the Massachusetts Cultural Council's EBT Card-to-Culture program. It offers free parking and free admission to its visual arts galleries. It is easily accessible by Route 2 and is roughly three blocks from a Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line stop.

### ***The Counter***

**By Meghan Kennedy**

**Directed by Alex Lonati**

**Sep 26-Nov 9, 2025 (Press opening 9/28)**

**Black Box**

This heartwarming play follows the unlikely connection between Paul, a retired firefighter who goes every morning to the same small town diner, and Katie, who's always there to pour the coffee. After many months of small talk across the counter, the sharing of one secret grows into a deeply meaningful, life-affirming friendship—shocking both Paul and Katie into embracing the hopes and joys born of basic human connection. This award-winning play is a surprising and moving meditation on the everyday connections that can change our lives.

"The subtle beauty of *The Counter* lies in watching these two burrowing creatures develop the kind of bond that means they're pulling each other back up towards the light." — *New York Magazine*

"Kennedy deals in secrets and grief and escape, in running away and starting again, and most crucially in standing in front of a suddenly opened door: You either stay inside, crushed by your habitual fear and unhappiness, or bravely walk through." — *New York Stage Review*

### ***Tick, Tick...Boom!***

**Book, Music and Lyrics by Jonathan Larson**

**Directed by Ilyse Robbins**

**Oct 10-Nov 23, 2025 (Press opening 10/12)**

**Main Stage Theater 144**

Before *Rent*, there was *Tick, Tick... Boom!*. This autobiographical musical by Jonathan Larson, the Pulitzer Prize- and Tony Award-winning composer of *Rent*, is the story of a composer and the sacrifices that he made to achieve his big break in theater. *Tick, Tick... Boom!* takes you on the playwright/composer's journey through his quarter-life crisis that led to a Broadway blockbuster.

His girlfriend wants to get married and move out of the city, his best friend is making big bucks on Madison Avenue, and yet Jon is still waiting on tables and trying to write the great American musical. Set in 1990, this compelling story of personal discovery is presented as a rock musical filled with instantly appealing melodies and a unique blend of musical theater styles.

"Larson's gift for brilliant lyrics and driving music is clear in each of the score's 12 winning songs." — *Chicago Sun Times*

"Searingly honest, frank, and unabashedly personal." — *Chicago Tribune*

***To Kill A Mockingbird***

**Dramatized by Christopher Sergel**

**Based on the book by Harper Lee**

**Directed by Scott Edmiston**

**Feb 27-Mar 22, 2026 (Press opening 3/1)**

**Main Stage Theater 144**

Adapted from the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* opens in a sleepy Alabama town in the midst of the Great Depression, where Scout and her brother, Jem, live with their widowed father, lawyer Atticus Finch. While the children act out stories and muse about their mysterious neighbor, Boo Radley, the facade of their seemingly peaceful town begins to crack when a young black man is accused of a terrible crime. Driven by an unshakeable moral conviction, Atticus defends the man in a trial that sends violent waves through the community, teaching young Scout about prejudice, compassion and the courage to do what is right. This hard-hitting work is an all-new production of Harper Lee's story that is timeless, lingering, and searingly relevant.

***Hairspray the Broadway Musical***

**Book by Mark O'Donnell and Thomas Meehan**

**Music by Marc Shaiman**

**Lyrics by Scott Wittman and Marc Shaiman**

**Based on the New Line Cinema film written and directed by John Waters**

**Directed by Najee Brown**

**Apr 24-May 17, 2026 (Press opening 4/26)**

**Main Stage Theater 144**

The 1950s are out, and change is in the air! *Hairspray*, winner of eight Tony Awards, including Best Musical, is a musical piled bouffant-high with laughter, romance and deliriously tuneful songs. It's 1962 in Baltimore, and Tracy Turnblad has only one desire – to dance on the popular *Corny Collins Show*. When her dream comes true, Tracy is transformed from high school outcast to sudden star. She must use her newfound power to dethrone the reigning Teen Queen, win the affections of heartthrob Link Larkin, and integrate a TV network... all without denting her 'do!

"*Hairspray* is as sweet as a show can be without promoting tooth decay. ...[It] succeeds in recreating the pleasures of the old-fashioned musical comedy without seeming old-fashioned.

"...The score's appeal isn't nostalgic. It's music that builds its own self-contained, improbably symmetrical world...." - *The New York Times*