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NOVA Y. PAYTON MAKES A MATCH IN THE TITLE ROLE OF *HELLO, DOLLY!* AT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Frequent collaborator Kevin S. McAllister directs the classic musical of love, money, and mayhem that begins November 6 and runs through the New Year

Olney, MD — October 6, 2025 — Olney Theatre Center continues its tradition of big holiday musicals with *Hello, Dolly* in the **Roberts Mainstage (November 6 - January 4)**. Two-time Helen Hayes Award-winner **Nova Y. Payton** stars as the meddling matchmaker Dolly Levi in a production directed by **Kevin S. McAllister**, choreographed by **Eamon Foley**, and music direction by **Christopher Youstra**. **The invited press performance is Sunday, November 9, at 8:00 pm. Interested critics may reserve one or two tickets by emailing sstraub@olneytheatre.org.** Tickets are available to the public from \$27 - \$112 and can be purchased at olneytheatre.org/hellodolly or by calling the box office at 301-924-3400.

To accommodate family audiences, the regular curtain times for this production will be adjusted to **7:00 pm for evening performances and 1:00 pm for matinees**.

Says Olney Theatre's **Senior Associate Artistic Director Hallie Gordon**, "*Hello, Dolly!* is a true classic of American musical theater that everyone should experience. Director Kevin McAllister, Music Director Chris Youstra, and Choreographer Eamon Foley are creating a vibrant production that honors the timeless story. While the show evokes a 'simpler' time when women were often relegated to being wives and homemakers, Dolly is a force of nature—she's out of this world. In the end, she gets exactly what she wants, spreading love and wealth as she goes."

In addition to Payton, Broadway veteran **Moses Villarama** (*Here Lies Love*) makes his Olney Theatre debut as the irascible bachelor (and "half-millionaire") Horace Vandergelder, whom Dolly marks for marriage. **Michael Perrie Jr.** (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*) and **Rick DeVon Hall** (*Disney's Frozen*) star as Cornelius and Barnaby, Horace's clerks, headed for an adventure in the city. **Caitlin Brooke** (Ford's Theatre's *Sister Act*) and **Alex De Bard** (*Disney's Frozen*) play hatshop owner Irene Molloy and her assistant Minnie Fay. **Wood Van Meter** (Waitress) plays Ambrose Kemper, who seeks Dolly's help wooing Horace's niece Ermengarde, played by **Anna Maria C. Ferrari**. **Montel B. Butler** (*Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*) plays Rudolph the maitre'd, and **Karen Vincent** (*World Goes Round*) handles the role of the eccentric Ernestina Money, as well as serving as the understudy for Dolly Levi. Rounding out the large ensemble are **Eve Dillingham**, **Ciara Hargrove**, **Delaney Jackson**, **Alyssa Enita Stanford**, **Taryn Smithson**, **Ava Wilson**, **Quadry Brown**, **Patrick Leonardo Casimir**, **Matthew Millin**,

Robert Mintz, Nico Nazal, and Eli Schulman. Emmy J. Lane and James B. Mernin swing for the 9-week-long run.

Joining McAllister, Foley, and Youstra on the creative team are **Riw Rakkulchon** (Scenic Designer), **Paris Francesca and Julie Cray-Leong** (Co-Costume Designers), **Rueben D. Echoles** (Wig Designer), **Christina Watanabe** (Lighting Designer), and **Matthew Rowe** (Sound Designer). **Ben Walsh** is the Production Stage Manager, with Assistant Stage Managers **Fior Tat**, and **Kate Kilbane**.

MedStar is the Opening Night Partner and the Trusted Medical Team of Olney Theatre. **Roberts Oxygen** is the 2025-26 Season Sponsor.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

Hello, Dolly!

Book by Michael Stewart

Music and Lyrics by Jerry Herman

Based on the play *The Matchmaker* by Thornton Wilder

Original Production Directed and Choreographed by Gower Champion

Produced for the Broadway Stage by David Merrick and Champion Five, Inc

Music Directed by Christopher Youstra

Choreographed by Eamon Foley

Directed by Kevin S. McAllister

Dates, Location, Tickets

November 6, 2025 - January 4, 2026

Roberts Mainstage

Olney Theatre Center

2001 Olney-Sandy Spring Road

Olney, MD 20832

Tickets: \$27 - \$112 available at olneytheatre.org/hellodolly and 301-924-3400

Discounts for teachers, active military, and first responders are available at:
olneytheatre.org/discounts

Performance Schedule

Wednesday through Saturday evenings at 7:00 pm.

Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday matinees at 1:00 pm.

Select Sunday evenings at 7:00 pm.

Additional performances will take place around Thanksgiving and Winter Break.

See the full schedule at: <https://tickets.olneytheatre.org/overview/hellodolly>

Accessible Performances

Audio-Described Performance – Wednesday, November 19 at 7:00 pm

ASL Interpreted Performance – Thursday, November 20 at 7:30 pm
Sensory Friendly Performance – Saturday, December 6 at 1:00 pm

RELATED EVENTS

Behind the Scenes

From Sweethearts to Swipes: Matchmaking Across the Ages

Date: Sun, Nov 9th 2025, 5:00-6:00 p.m.

Location: Roberts Stage

\$10 / Free for members

What does Dolly Levi have in common with today's matchmakers—and what sets them apart? Before the opening night performance of *Hello, Dolly!*, join us at for a fascinating Behind the Scenes conversation that compares Dolly's old-world charm with the digital tools and techniques shaping love in the 21st century.

Featuring: **Professor Jui Ramaprasad** (Associate Professor of Information Systems at the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland), **Miriam Levitin** (Luv with Lev Matchmaking), and **Hilary Klein, Ph.D.**

In The Community

Story Time at the Olney Library

Story reader: Liz Osborn

Date: Sunday, Nov 9th, 2:00–3:00 p.m.

Location: Olney Public Library (3500 Olney Laytonsville Rd, Olney, MD 20832)

No RSVP. Just show up!

Beyond the Stage:

Happy Hour: Musical Theatre Trivia!

Date: Thursday, Nov 20, 2025, 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: Cafritz Lobby at Olney Theatre Center

\$10

If your brain is full of random Broadway-related knowledge that you don't know what to do with, put it to the test at our Musical Theatre Trivia Happy Hour! Sign up with a team, or come as a single and make some new friends. Then, take in a performance of *Hello, Dolly!* (tickets sold separately).

Host: Maestro Christopher Youstra

Onstage Tours

Location: Roberts Mainstage Theatre

Sunday, Nov 23, 2025 (capacity 30) 4:00 pm

Sunday, Dec 7, 2025 (capacity 30) 4:00 pm

Cost: \$10

How does a professional theater bring the magic of a story on stage? We're inviting folks of every age to come on stage and see how we do it. Lighting demonstrations, costume and prop displays, scenery moves... our professional production staff Philip Snider, Stage Operations

Manager & Carissa Gilson, Wardrobe Supervisor/Costume Shop Associate will take you on an amazing Onstage Tour. RSVP early; this event tends to sell out fast!

Community Choirs

December 5

December 7

December 14

Before select performances of *Hello, Dolly!* the Roberts Mainstage Lobby will come alive with the sounds of local choral ensembles. Join us early to enjoy these talented community groups sharing their music in celebration of the show.

These pre-show concerts are **free and open to everyone**—no ticket required. Just come, listen, and let the music set the stage for an unforgettable night at the theatre.

- **Special Event – December 7**

Don't miss a one-night-only **pop-up chorus** led by **Chris Youstra, our Associate Artistic Director of Music Theatre.**

Arts & Crafts with Anna Cable

December 13 at 11:00 AM

Actors' Hall

\$10

Join our Props Supervisor, Anna Cable, for a fun and easy hands-on activity inspired by the whimsical world of *Hello, Dolly!* Anna, who helped bring the show's props to life onstage, will guide participants through a simple, step-by-step craft project connected to the colorful hats, parasols, and other turn-of-the-century treasures you'll see in the production. No special skills or supplies needed—just bring your creativity and enjoy making a keepsake you can take home!

ABOUT OLNEY THEATRE CENTER

Mission

Olney Theatre Center for the Arts produces and curates theatrical performance for the diverse audiences in our community, and educates, learns from, supports and inspires a more inclusive generation of theater-makers.

Vision

We strive to become an arts and culture powerhouse, redefining the American regional theater movement by cultivating and sharing the creativity of our community.

History

Founded in 1938 as a summer playhouse, Olney Theatre Center (OTC) now produces world and American premieres of plays and musicals, and reimaginings of familiar titles year-round; presents the

work of leading companies and artists; tours nationally and locally; teaches students of all ages; and mentors a more inclusive generation of theatremakers. For more than 8 decades, OTC has brought impactful theater performance and education to our community, helping to grow the vibrancy and vitality of our home in the Washington, DC region.

Over the years, some of the biggest names in theater and film have appeared on our stages, including Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Jessica Tandy, Hume Cronyn, Bob Fosse, Phillip Bosco, Eve Arden, Eva Gabor, Burl Ives, Jose Ferrer, Carol Channing, Olivia d'Havilland, Tony Randall, Paulette Goddard, Dorothy and Lillian Gish, Jane Seymour, Anne Revere, Frances Sternhagen, Arthur Treacher, James Broderick, Olympia Dukakis, Sir Ian McKellen, Marica Gay Harden, John Colicos, Uzo Aduba, Alan Cumming, Cheyenne Jackson, Robin de Jesus, Wilson Jermaine Heredia, Bernadette Peters, among many, many others.

Olney Theatre is now the cultural anchor of a rapidly changing region and serves one of the most diverse, best educated, and wealthiest counties in the country. Situated on the unceded land of the Piscataway-Conoy people, the Olney area was once a rural farming community with a unique Quaker heritage. Now the area is occupied by every kind of family that makes up 21st Century America, along with major corporations, shopping districts, civic associations, non profit organizations and a diverse collection of houses of worship. Montgomery County's 1 million residents play a dynamic role in the Baltimore-Washington corridor, and are a driving force behind the region's creative economy.

Olney Theatre Center employs 45 full time staff, 20+ part-time positions, 13 early career apprentices, and more than 400 professional artists annually. The Theatre is currently in the final phase of a \$36M capital campaign to build new infrastructure that better meets the needs of our community.

For more information, please visit olneytheatre.org/history

Follow Olney Theatre Center on Instagram, TikTok, and Threads @olneytheatre and on Facebook at facebook.com/olneytheatre.

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