



President's Letter

Kristofer Geddie

AACT President

As I look back on 2025, I feel a deep sense of gratitude for this extraordinary community. This year has been full of moments that reminded me why I fell in love with community theatre in the

first place: the way a rehearsal room brings together people of all ages and backgrounds; the way a performance can transform an audience; and the way the bonds we form in this work often last a lifetime.

I've been especially moved by the chance to meet so many new people—whether in your theatres, serving as Commissioner for the Pennsylvania Festival in Gettysburg on the road to AACTFest, or in conversations that reveal just how strong and generous our AACT family truly is. These connections aren't only professional—they are personal. I carry your stories with me and share them often. They continue to fuel my passion for both theatre and AACT.

One of the clearest lessons this year reinforced is that community theatre isn't just about the plays we produce—it's about the people who bring them to life. The volunteers who welcome audiences, the artists who devote countless hours to their craft, the leaders who find creative ways to keep the lights on—you are the heartbeat of this movement. Being surrounded by such dedication keeps me inspired every single day.

A big red-lipstick kiss to our overseas veterans, then and now!

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Looking ahead to 2026, I'm excited about what's possible. There will, of course, be challenges, but there will also be countless opportunities to tell stories that matter, to nurture new voices, and to continue growing together. I truly believe the best of AACT is still ahead of us. And remember: I challenge each of you to bring at least one new member into our family this year.

As always, we want to hear from you. *Spotlight* is your magazine, and we want it to reflect what excites, challenges, and inspires you. If there are features you'd love to see, issues you'd like us to explore, or stories you believe deserve to be told, please share your thoughts with us. Your feedback is not just welcome—it's essential. Thank you for making 2025 such a memorable year. I'm proud to walk alongside you as we step into 2026 with open hearts, bold ideas, and the joy of theatre lighting our way. And if I don't see you in Sandy, Utah, at our Winter Adventure in February, I hope to see you in Venice, Florida, at WorldFest in June 2026!





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On the Cover

Beauty and the Beast performed onstage at Hale Centre Theatre in Sandy, Utah.

Photo credit: @LeaveItToLeavitt.

nickelodeon.

"Effervescent candy for the spirit!"

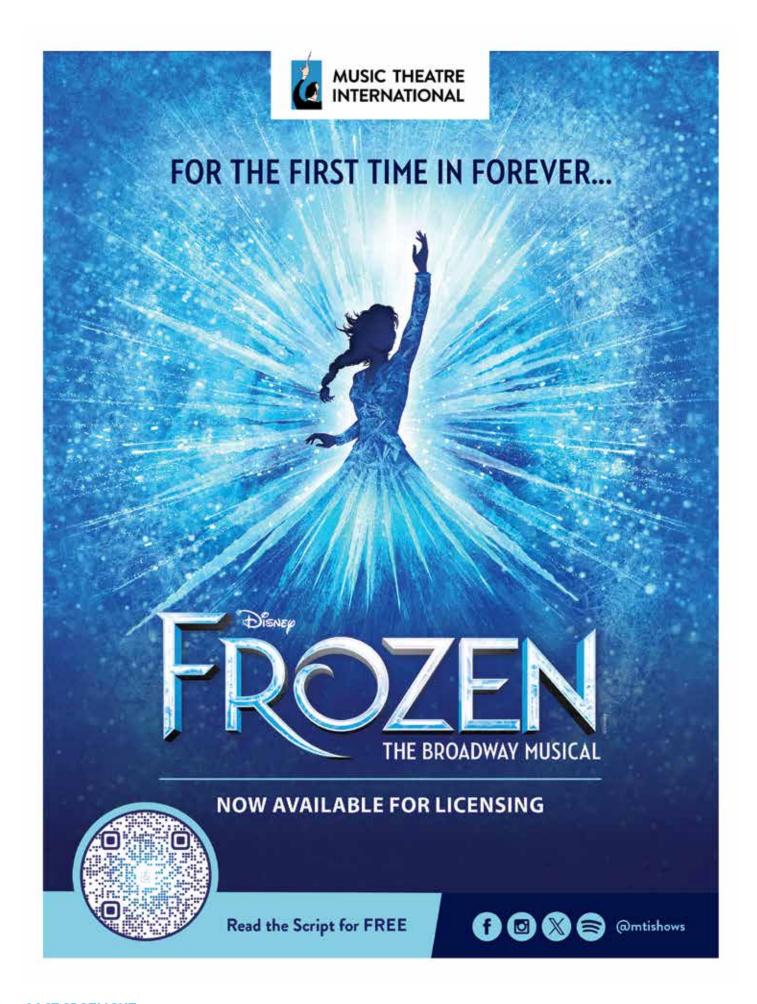
- New York Magazine

Featuring irresistible characters and a magical score, The SpongeBob Musical gives your audiences the Best Day Ever to enjoy the power of friendship, community and optimism: concordsho.ws/SpongeBob

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November 5, 2025 - January 20, 2026

aact.org/national-awards

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February 12 – 13, 2026

Hale Centre Theatre, Sandy, Utah

aact.org/calendar

AACT Winter Board Meetings

February 12-14, 2026, Sandy, Utah

aact.org/calendar

Salt Lake Theatre Adventure

February 12-14, 2026

Hale Centre Theatre, Sandy, Utah

aact.org/adventure-26

For full listing of upcoming events visit aact.org/calendar

Watch for new online programming this Winter!

Member Roundtables

Peer-to-peer discussion and networking opportunities

aact.org/roundtables

Virtual Masterclasses

In-depth 75–90 minute explorations of specific skills or topics

aact.org/virtual-masterclasses

Industry Connections

Industry providers showcase their services in 30-minute presentations

aact.org/industry-connections



Spotlight

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Community Theatre Snapshot: 2026 Season Survey

Michael Cochran

Community theatres come in all shapes and sizes, from small volunteer-driven groups to well-funded organizations with significant budgets. The 2026 Season Survey gathers responses from 110 theatres from across the country, offering a fascinating look at how community theatres are planning, programming, and adapting in to-day's landscape.

Some of the statistics mirror previous years, including the number of productions staged by individual theatres, as well as the dominance of non-musical productions over musical productions. Last year's top musical, *Waitress*, didn't appear in this year's list of productions. This follows the trend of new releases trending to the top of the list and then dropping off quickly.

Timing is another factor. *Come From Away* and *Dear Evan Hansen* were just being released in May, after most theatres had made their next-season selections. As a result, these titles made this year's list, but not at the top.

The Rocky Horror Show jumped up from fourth place last year to first place this year, and Annie—which wasn't in any of the top four musicals last year—tied for the number-one slot. In non-musicals, the newly released *The Cottage* jumped to the top spot this year.

Nearly 40% of theatres reported incorporating inclusive initiatives into season planning.

Budgets and Resources

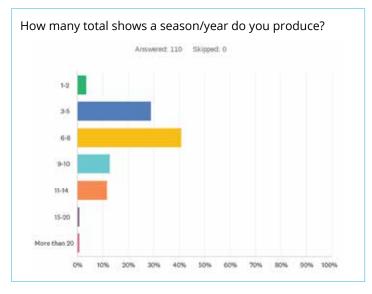
The financial picture varies widely. About one in five theatres reported annual budgets between \$100,000 and \$250,000, while nearly the same number reported budgets between \$250,000 and \$500,000. At the other end of the spectrum, 15% of theatres operate on shoestring budgets of \$25,000 or less. That range underscores the diverse realities of producing live theatre at the community level.

Planning the Season

Timing is everything when it comes to choosing a slate of shows. 41% of theatres makes their selections early in the calendar year. 59% are spread out later in the year. 63% of theatres have a traditional fall-to-spring season, while 37% have a different season time period. More than a third of theatres have a calendar-year format, beginning in January.

Who's in the Seats-and on the Stage

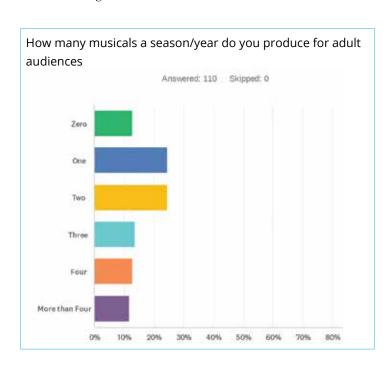
Adult audiences remain the primary focus. More than 70% of theatres program shows that are geared toward adults, with many producing six to eight adult-oriented productions each year. Youth programming, however, is also thriving: over half of theatres report running a separate youth season or series.



Behind the scenes, volunteers form the backbone of these organizations. The survey revealed an even spread: 25% of theatres rely on fewer than 50 volunteers, 21% rely on 50-100 volunteers, and 24% rely on 100-200 volunteers. Casting pools are similarly varied, with 46% of theatres utilizing 26–99 actors, and 26% of theatres utilizing 100-200 performers annually.

What Drives Season Choices?

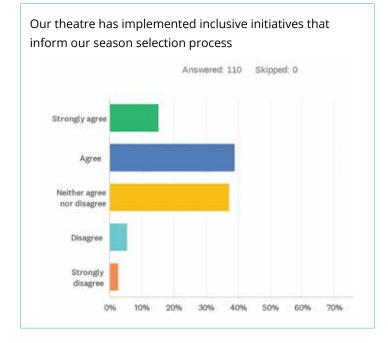
When it comes to choosing shows, name recognition reigns supreme. Two-thirds of respondents said community familiarity with a title was their top consideration. Just behind that was the type of show—whether comedy, drama, or musical. The balancing act of appealing to audiences while stretching artistic boundaries remains a familiar challenge.



Inclusion and New Voices

Efforts toward diversity and inclusion are ongoing, but uneven. Nearly 40% of theatres reported incorporating inclusive initiatives into season planning, while a similar number remained neutral. A small, but notable, group of 15% of theatres strongly agreed that inclusivity was central to their programming decisions.

Original and new works continue to be a point of exploration. Half of respondents produced an original script within the past three years, and 40% of those productions were described as financially successful. Of the 26 theatres (23%) that had considered one of the AACT NewPlayFest scripts, only 11 theatres (10%) had produced one of the scripts. Still, awareness of opportunities like AACT's NewPlayFest remains limited, with many theatres unfamiliar with the partnership that helps bring new plays to community stages. When theatres were asked why they hadn't considered a NewPlayFest script, a significant number said they were unaware of the AACT NewPlayFest and Dramatic Publishing partnership that exists to develop and publish new scripts specifically for community theatres. As a result, AACT will be looking at ways to get the word out to more theatres.



Appendix: Titles by Category

Of 139 unique Musicals submitted, the most frequently produced titles include:

- Annie by Thomas Meehan, Charles Strouse and Martin Charnin (7 productions)
- Richard O'Brien's *The Rocky Horror Show* (7 productions)
- Disney's Frozen by Jennifer Lee, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, and Robert Lopez (5 productions)
- Roald Dahl's Matilda The Musical by Dennis Kelly and Tim Minchin (5 productions)

Of the 228 Non-Musicals submitted, the most frequently produced titles include:

- The Cottage by Sandy Rustin (6 productions)
- Dracula: A Comedy of Terrors by Gordon Greenberg and Steve Rosen (4 productions)

- Stephen King's Misery adapted by William Goldman (4 productions)
- Silent Sky by Lauren Gunderson (4 productions)
- The Importance of Being Earnest by Oscar Wilde (4 productions)
- Agatha Christie's The Mousetrap (4 productions)

Of the 46 Youth titles submitted, the most frequently produced titles include:

- Once Upon a Mattress: Youth Edition by Mary Rodgers, Jay Thompson, Dean Fuller, Marshall Barer (3 productions)
- Disney's Finding Nemo JR. by Lindsay Anderson, Kristen Anderson-Lopez, and Robert Lopez (2 productions)
- Shrek the Musical JR. by David Lindsay-Abaire and Jeanine Tesori (2 productions)
- Winnie the Pooh (various adaptations) (2 productions)

Half of respondents produced an original script within the past three years, and 40% of those productions were described as financially successful.

Outside Main or Youth Seasons (81 unique titles submitted)

Alternate and experimental productions were staged in black box spaces, in special series, or off-season slots, offering a wide range of material from audience favorites to more adventurous works. The top two productions listed were holiday add-on shows of *A Christmas Carol* with two productions, and *The Nuteracker* with three productions. All other titles submitted were being produced by only single theatres.

New and Original Scripts

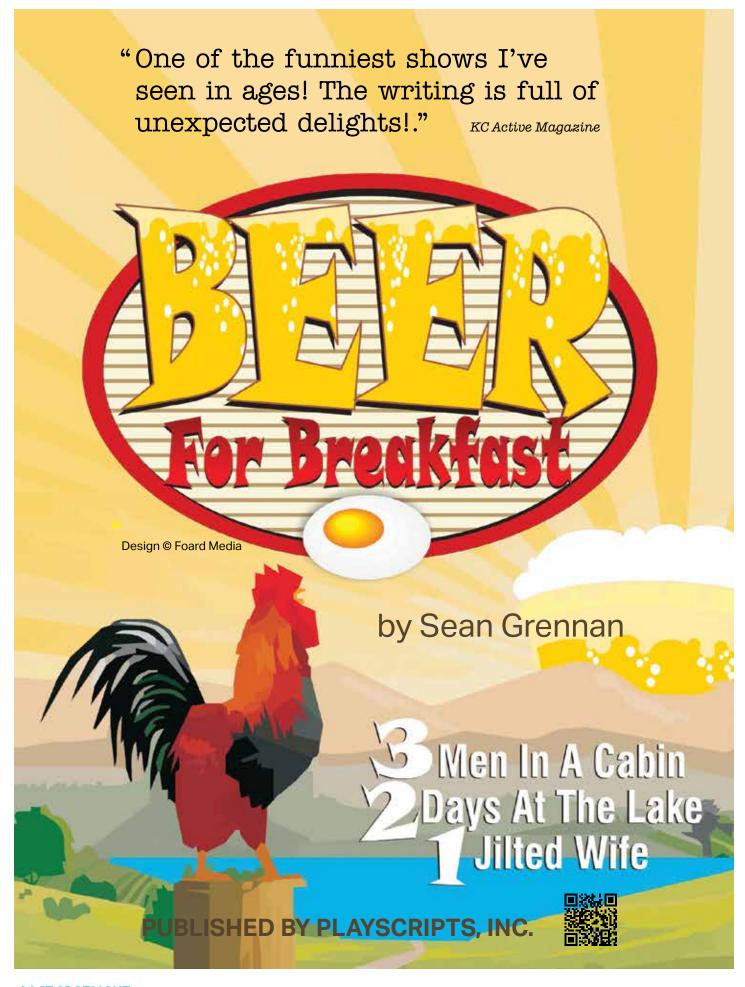
An equal number of theatres—46%—both produced and did not produce original works in the past three years. Of the theatres that produced new works, 40% reported that the production was financially successful, while only 7% said that it was not.

Visit aact.org/season26 to see this entire article online, complete with all graphs and statistical results.



Michael Cochran is Executive Director of Market House Theatre in Paducah, Kentucky, and serves on the AACT Board of Directors





WorldFest Returns to Venice Theatre

A Celebration of Theatre, Community, and the Gulf Coast

Kristofer Geddie

Next June, the spotlight shines brighter than ever on Florida's Gulf Coast as WorldFest returns to Venice Theatre, June 15-20, 2026. After years of anticipation—and a category five-sized delay—our AACT family, theatre lovers, artists, and community members will once again gather in Venice for a weeklong festival that blends international artistry with unmistakable, hospitable warmth.



A Global Community Celebration

WorldFest has long been known as more than just a theatre festival—it is a celebration of community, connection, and the joy of live performance. Since Venice Theatre began hosting in 2010, WorldFest's reputation has only grown. Over six vibrant days, Venice Theatre will welcome companies and performers from around the globe, transforming its stages and community venues into a dazzling showcase of cultures, stories, and artistic visions. The week will include performances, workshops, colloquia, and late-night afterglows where laughter, ideas, fellowship, and friendships flow freely. Participating countries and shows will be announced later, but works under consideration represent Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Central African Republic, Czech Republic, Italy, New Zealand, Philippines, Romania, Slovakia, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Experience Beautiful Venice

What truly sets WorldFest apart isn't only what happens under the lights—it's the way the festival radiates out into every corner of the city of Venice. Visitors quickly discover that a WorldFest experience is as much about the city itself as it is about the shows. Days often begin with a stroll along Venice's world-class sandy beaches, where turquoise waters and stunning sunsets provide the perfect backdrop for reflection and inspiration. Afternoons and evenings spill into lively restaurants along historic Venice Avenue, where festivalgoers swap stories over local fare or toast new friendships before heading back to the theatre for shows—and a cocktail at the theatre's bar.

A Spirit of Generosity

At the heart of the festival beats something even more powerful the volunteers. WorldFest would not be possible without the extraordinary dedication of Venice Theatre's volunteer community. These ushers, drivers, guides, production volunteers, home hosts, and countless others, embody the festival's spirit of generosity. They are the smiling faces that welcome international guests at the airport, the helping hands ensuring performances run seamlessly, and the enthusiastic ambassadors introducing visitors to Venice's hidden gems. Their commitment transforms WorldFest from an event into an experience—personal, unforgettable, and uniquely Venice.

Artistic Exchange

Equally central is the sense of networking and camaraderie. For performers and directors, WorldFest is an invaluable opportunity to meet peers from across the world, exchange creative ideas, and form collaborations that outlast the festival itself. For audience members, it's a rare chance to engage directly with artists, gain new perspectives, and become part of a global dialogue—all while feeling like part of one close-knit family.

Every evening, as the performances end and conversations spill into lobbies and lounges, WorldFest reveals its true magic. It's not only about the brilliance of what's onstage, but about the moments shared in between—the friendships sparked over a late-night meal, the stories traded under the Florida stars, and the collective joy of knowing you are part of something bigger than yourself.

Emily Anderson, past attendee and AACT Board Member, says, "When Venice Theatre hosts WorldFest...just go. They showcase some of the best community theatre happening all over the world, combined with great hospitality and a sense of fellowship with theatre artists unlike anything I've ever experienced elsewhere. It's a true celebration of community and the human experience!"

Save the Dates

So mark your calendars: WorldFest returns to Venice Theatre June 15-20, 2026. Whether you're a local, a returning festivalgoer, or a firsttime visitor, this is your invitation to experience an unforgettable week of international theatre, culture, and charm. Come for the performances, stay for the sunsets, and leave with memories—and friendships—that will last a lifetime.



2026 - The Year of Giving Back

How Theatres Can Strengthen Their Communities Through Acts of Service

Katrina Ploof

The social and economic challenges all around us can seem overwhelming. But there is hope, and it can be found in the recent past.

It was the NYC of the 1980s—a place of overwhelming grief and loss, as the theatre community was reeling from the effects of the AIDS crisis. The deliberate negligence of local and federal government had given the entire nation blanket permission to ignore this "gay plague." It was a terrifying and profoundly sad time to be a theatre artist.

But there was a light in the darkness, and it came from the very community that was struck the hardest: the tight-knit, loving tribe of Broadway actors, producers, designers, stage managers, and technicians. It was that community who founded Equity Fights AIDS/Broadway Cares in 1988, and in the ensuing years has provided over \$96 million in funding for over 450 organizations that offer services and support for those with HIV/AIDS.

We are theatre kids! We can do anything.

To borrow from, and paraphrase, Josh Groban, "You want to get something done? You want to fix a problem? Ask a theatre kid." In the 1980s and '90s, the theatre kids of Equity Fights AIDS/Broadway Cares did much to fill the huge gaps left in the wake of government and social disregard. Today, almost 40 years later, they continue to save and change countless lives.

Today's Challenges

Now, in 2025, it seems we are greeted every day by headlines announcing the elimination of social programs that assist our fellow citizens. We see local food banks, women's shelters, health clinics, and

educational outreach programs gutted and often shuttered. In the towns and cities across the country that have supported our community theatres for more than 100 years, we see friends and neighbors suffering the loss of the vital support they need.

So, the question must be asked: *How do we, as community theatres, find a way to give back?* We often are counting every ticket and every donation, crossing our fingers that we can stick to a budget and avoid a roof leak—or a 30-year-old light board that decides to stop working. We certainly can't contribute financially when we are scraping by ourselves. But here's the thing—we are theatre kids! We can do anything. And it turns out that many of our fellow theatres have found creative and generous ways to give back to the communities that have supported them for so long.

How Communities Are Giving Back

At the historic Waterville Opera House in Waterville, Maine, a book drive connected to a production of *Roald Dahl's Matilda, The Musical* brought in a whopping 419 books, which were shared with local organizations, including the Maine Children's Home, the Waterville Public Library, and the Lighthouse Soup Kitchen.

The "pass-the-hat" tradition at Greendale Community Theatre in Greendale, Wisconsin, has raised almost \$64,000 for local charities in recent seasons. The production of *Newsies* also provided a substantial donation to the Greater Milwaukee AFL-CIO, in support of over 80 local labor organizations, ultimately benefiting a wide cross-section of workers and families.

At the Dorset Theatre Festival in Dorset, Vermont, local EMS workers, firefighters, police, veterans, and active-duty military all benefit from the Festival's "Giving Back" program, which provides pay-

continued on page 14 🔾



MUSICALS AND PLAYS FOR EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR COMMUNITY



The Year of Giving Back continued from page 12

what-you like tickets to those who serve the Dorset community, along with their families.

Children & Families of Iowa benefited from a drive sponsored by the Des Moines Playhouse production of *Waitress*, which saw over 2,000 hygiene and personal care items delivered to local domestic violence shelters.

Whatever route you choose, make 2026 your year of giving back.

Each of these efforts cost nothing other than time and a little elbow grease. The opportunity to build lasting and trusting community relationships with other local nonprofits—and the goodwill these efforts generated—were side benefits to the very real joy of helping and giving back.

How Your Theatre Can Help

So how can your theatre get involved? Start by looking at your upcoming season: is there a show that has an obvious "hook" or theme for a contribution? Collect supply donations for a local animal shelter during *Annie*. What about seeds and bulbs for local beautification during *Big Fish* (daffodils anyone?); luggage donations to a shelter for unhoused citizens connected to a production of *Come From Away*; or gently-used instruments donated to students alongside a production of *The Music Man*. The possibilities are endless.

If you're a theatre with your own facility, consider donating the space for the nonprofits in your community to use for meetings or fundraisers. Donating profits from one performance is always a great way to make a gift. The holiday season also presents an opportunity to provide a drop-off location for donations to food banks and other support services. Theatre hours (especially evenings) lend themselves to a more varied schedule for potential donors.

A Call to Action

We in theatre have made a difference in our communities for as long as we have been there—providing joy and laughter, a place to belong, and a place to thrive. But if we step away from our creative pursuits long enough to really ponder what our cities and towns need besides great theatre, we will see where we can help. And we *are* theatre kids—we always want to help!

So, whatever route you choose, make 2026 your year of giving back. Talk to your board about one project you can launch for next year. Our communities have kept our doors open for over a century—let's return the favor.



Katrina Ploof is a native of the great state of Maine. In the past 40 years, she has directed, choreographed, or coached over 250 productions in the U.S. and Canada. She has adjudicated theatre festivals throughout the U.S. and Canada for over 20 years. Katrina is also a published playwright and has been a member of the Lincoln Center Theatre Directors Laboratory since 2000.







BERTHA'S BBQ By Kim E. Ruyle

From Dramatic Publishing, 2F / 3M

Ruyle expertly tackles and dissects race relations in the 50s via a rustic tale filled with tension, danger, innocence, and humanity. Exceptional storytelling and exquisitely devised characters. Fantastic!



Look for these engaging plays from Kim E. Ruyle



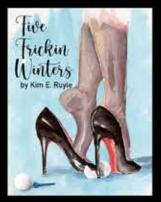


A Crooked French Affair, 6F/4M From Next Stage Press Wickedly funny! A love letter to theatre and people who make it.





Sliding into Seniorhood, 3F/3M From Next Stage Press A charming romantic comedy that springs a stunning conclusion.





Five Frickin Winters, 2F/2M, **Mature Audiences** From Next Stage Press
A witty, complex play about the prickly pitfalls of romance & infidelity.

On the Road with Hamilton Life on Tour with one of Broadway's Biggest Hits

Mary Doveton

What is it like to be "in the room where it happened" almost every day for three years?

That is the question that I recently posed to Taylor N. Daniels. Taylor played George Eacker in the road company of *Hamilton* between 2018 and 2023, including memorable performances during the Covid years.



Tyler N. Daniels

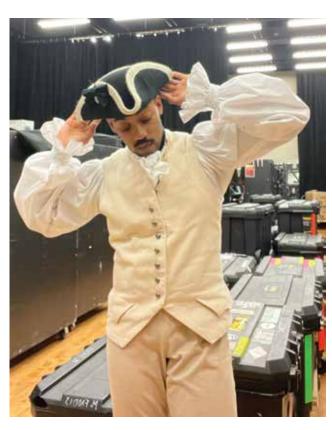
A dancer from his youth, Daniels did multiple years of The Nutcracker with Concert Ballet of Virginia where the community theatre traditions of setting up and tearing down shows became ingrained. Later, as a graduate of the Tisch School of Drama at NYU, Daniels was no stranger to "the road," having previously toured with Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat and Rogers & Hammerstein's Cinderella. His work has taken him to 48 states, Canada, Japan, and Puerto Rico.

Taylor was particularly interested in *Hamilton* after having worked with choreographer Andy Blankenbuehler during a previous tour. His stint in *Hamilton* was by far his longest tour, and even gave him opportunities to play tourist in the cities where the production stayed for multiple weeks.



Beginning At the Kennedy Center

For Taylor, the *Hamilton* tour began at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He described the time as "magical—the care that goes into that place is next-level." The Kennedy Center start, while iconic, was not without its challenges.



All costumes for the show were constructed specifically for the individual performers, using either period materials or close substitutes—primarily heavy wools and canvas. Yet when Taylor dressed for the first time in the costumes labeled with his name, he found that his costumes—and those of another actor joining the company at the same time—had their labels switched. The other actor was five sizes smaller, and while Taylor may have looked fit, the other actor looked like he had dressed in his father's clothes!

The Demands of Precision

After being cast, rigorous rehearsals became the order of the day. In a show like *Hamilton*, where the ensemble both dances and moves much of the scenery, there are extreme physical challenges. Taylor described thorough rehearsals in which everyone learned the company combinations, then each dancer was taught individual moves to place every item onstage—down to the last table knife.

The rigors of such a physical show often took a toll on the



Taylor shares his techniques and experiences with a youth class at Theatre Lawrence (Lawrence, Kansas)

cast, with sickness and injuries sometimes plaguing the tour as it careened through the Covid years. Cast members were tested prior to each show, and Taylor recalled one occasion when he and several other castmates, laid low with Covid, remained in Memphis while the bus went on without them.

> "I had to change how I prepped for the show every day, including altitude preparation."

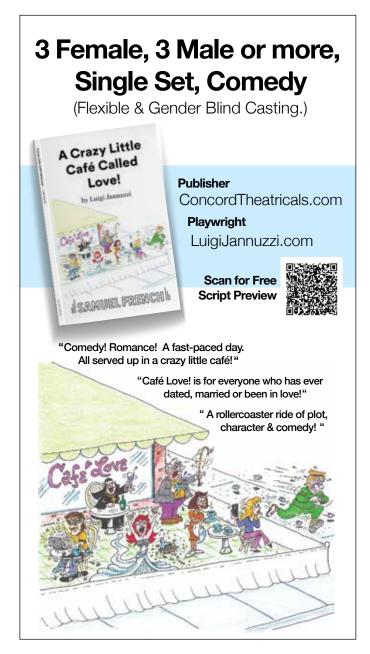
Company members had to remain in top physical shape to cope with the challenges of touring. Physical, vocal, and mental workouts were a part of daily life. Taylor described the difficulty of acclimating to higher elevations and the toll it took on breath support needed for the performances.

"Visiting New Mexico and Arizona was an experience! I've never been anywhere so elevated and dry! I had to change how I prepped for the show every day, including altitude preparation. Learning to dance and sing with way less oxygen than I was used to. The weather in both places never got below 80."

Life Offstage

While tour members crisscrossed the country, bringing the joy and energy of Hamilton to thousands of people, they also had lives off the stage. Living out of a size-prescribed trunk made for selective packing, but Taylor continued his tie dye business often using hotel sinks, showers, or garbage cans to create his pieces, sometimes hanging them in windows to air dry.

continued on page 18 >



Lengthy tours like *Hamilton* can also be lonely when you are far from family and friends, and constantly traveling to new locations. Decent food was also not always easy to come by. A

Living out of a size-prescribed trunk made for selective packing.

home cook himself, Taylor described his culinary improvisations. He traveled with a moka pot to make *cafecito* (Cuban coffee) each morning, then fixed everything from spaghetti to fried chicken—and Thanksgiving dinners to birthday cakes—in hotel rooms by getting creative with microwaves and hot plates. "Anything stovetop became a hotel staple," he said.

Audience Energy

Playing the show night after night also meant adjusting to the vagaries of audiences. From enthusiastic cheering during curtain

calls, to houses where people left early to beat traffic, Taylor saw it all. He described the most jubilant audiences as being at the end of the tour in Puerto Rico.

"The audience was akin to a rock concert. The energy was electric."





Mary Doveton was founder and is Executive Director Emeritus at Theatre Lawrence (Kansas), and a past AACT Board Member. She is an AACT Fellow, and a current contributor and member of the AACT Spotlight Editorial Team.



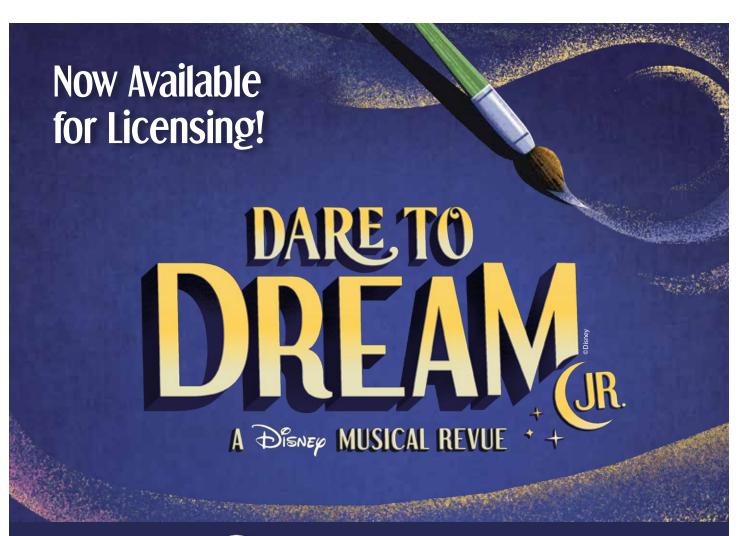
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Playwrights Corner Inside the Process with Playwright Sean Grennan

Interview by Michael Cochran

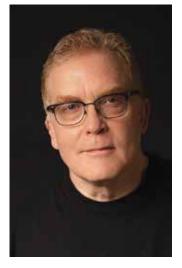
With this issue, Spotlight debuts Playwrights Corner, a new series of candid conversations with the voices shaping the stages we love. For our inaugural installment, Editorial Team member Michael Cochran, with help from Kathy Pingel, asks playwright Sean Grennan about stories that resonate, the collaborators who sharpen them, and the choices that make a scene spark.

What topic of interest is next up? What topic has been shelved for too long?

Oh boy, I have a drawer of things that I think aren't too bad. Most recently, I'm working on a play called <code>Keep/Toss</code>, about three generations of a family helping their matriarch clear out her house so she can sell it and move to a senior living situation. Some members of the family are estranged, but they're being forced to work together and, as you might expect, it doesn't go all that smoothly. It's not political at all, but there are some overtones about the grudges and divisions that we're experiencing as a country right now. And there are jokes! It also features one sibling who is neurodivergent. That role is sort of a tribute to my brother, but he's not played for laughs any more than anyone else in the play is. I think it's about grudges, healing, and letting go of things that really aren't important—hence the name <code>Keep/Toss</code>. I also have a show about near-death experiences, based on a true story, and I'm starting a new one. I try to keep busy.

When you decide on a play, where's the starting point? What are the stages of the project?

It really depends on the show. Once I have an idea, which can come from anywhere, sometimes I just jump in and go. (I never outline.) Other times it's important to do research, interview people, read up. With *The Tin Woman*, since it was about a heart transplant, I talked to people and did research before I wrote a word. Getting any of the technical stuff wrong would certainly come back to bite me.



Sean Grennan

After that, I pretty much write in a fever till I spit out an awful, rancid draft of the show. I go on to get a group of associates (see below) to read it, and then move on to doing readings with actors. I always learn a lot from even a Zoom reading. I do a few of them and then, when I think it's as far as I can go that way, I might approach a theatre about a staged reading for a small audience. The actors always teach me things, as does the audience. After all that, if I haven't decided I'm a complete fraud and a shameless poseur, I try to get it to theatres that might be interested.

Who do you trust to share the first draft of describe the value of

the play? Once it's ready, describe the value of input from actors and directors.

For me, the first time I let someone look at a new thing, it's terrifying. However, I've developed a small circle of friends/colleagues that I trust. (I do it for some of them, too.) I ask them to be brutally honest. It does me no good at all to be told it's great, just to spare my feelings. And I'd rather hear it from them than from future reviewers and audiences. In that first circle, I have a director, a playwright, a couple of actors, and, occasionally, someone not in the theatre. I do this because all of them come at it from different angles.

During rehearsals for the *Now and Then* premiere, the two younger actors came to me with a concern about their "break up" scene—that it



was too easy and brief for all the weight that their story carried. And they were absolutely right! I went back to my room that evening and wrote a better, longer, more moving scene for them, and they crushed it. I feel that at some point, actors know the show better than you do.

You've developed a great relationship with Peninsula Players Theatre in Fish Creek, Wisconsin, premiering four plays there. How did that relationship begin and why has it continued to grow?

I've absolutely loved my relationship with Peninsula Players! I'm originally from Chicago and there is a strong Chicago connection to that Wisconsin theatre. I started there with Making God Laugh, a play that was sort of a transition for me from just writing straight comedies to adding a bit more depth and darkness, while still getting laughs. I did a reading of it in NYC with Tony winner Rondi Reed, my sister, Erin Grennan, and others. Greg Vinkler, who was the AD at Peninsula,

> "We need to sometimes challenge, or at least surprise, our audiences and ourselves."

attended and then took a chance on me. The show did pretty well. After that, Greg encouraged me to keep going in that direction with the successive premieres we did. They wanted me to be honest and to bleed on the page a little, while still writing something engaging and, even in the darkest moments, with some humor. The present AD, Linda Fortunato, continued to challenge me to keep digging, and we finally got to work on a premiere together when she staged A Rock Sails By.

What advice would you give to theatres that are reluctant to produce new titles?

I think I'd start out with something like "Listen up, you weasels...!" They love that tough talk... But seriously, I get it. At every level and with every budget, we're in a business, and doing an established title might sell more tickets. I think what I'd suggest is that this weird thing we do has to be about more than just trying to make the rent. We need to sometimes challenge, or at least surprise, our audiences and ourselves. To that end, a season that is a mixture of the "tried and true," maybe a musical, and something new, seems to me to be the smart way to go. Most theatre goers are pretty sophisticated. They may want to just be entertained sometimes, but I think they also want to be challenged a bit. I don't mean lectured to, but shown something relatable that starts a conversation. And when those shows go well, I've been told that audiences become more passionate, even inspired loyal subscribers and volunteers. They feel part of something unique. Not a bad outcome.

Beside partnering with a theatre, what are other avenues for getting a new play produced?

It's always been a pretty tough game, and on the heels of the pandemic and the cultural shifts we're experiencing, it's gotten tougher. I had the good fortune to do several shows at The American Heartland Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri with AD Paul Hough, where I learned a metric ton and had a receptive situation, similar to my work at Peninsula Players. If you don't have that sort of relationship, another way is to try to get your play into a festival or contest to gain some buzz. I will say that my personal, anecdotal experience is that even if you do get in one, it can still mean nothing for the future life of the piece. As for other things, I'm not a big fan of self-producing; I haven't done it, but I will

Music of Frank Sinatra OTHER MUSICALS: Christmas My Way - A Sinatra Holiday Bash I Left My Heart - A Salute to the Music of Tony Bennett Simply Simone - The Music of Nina Simone Babes in Hollywood - The Music of Garland and Rooney One More For My Baby - A Sinatra Songbook Town Without Pity - The Love Songs of Gene Pitney **Bonnie & Clyde Club Morocco PLAYS:** Dracula - The Case of the Silver Scream (Film Noir) The Incredible Jungle Journey of Fenda Maria Casa Blue—The Last Moments in the Life of Freda Kahlo **Vampire Monologues** War of the Worlds Scripts, Information, and Licensing at: summerwindproductions.com **WINTER 2025** 21

My Way

A Tribute to the

continued on page 22 >

Playwright's Corner continued from page 21

admit, it sometimes it works out. Of course, having personal and professional relationships with people who will read and consider your work can be helpful, but you have to be careful not to damage the friendship. I think the best thing to do is write great plays that are irresistible! Another thought: If there is a theatre you like that did a show that is close in type to your show, it's worth trying. The hard part is that many have gatekeepers that will only work with literary agents or through personal artistic recommendations. (Full disclosure: I've never worked with a literary agent. Another story for another article....)

If a community theatre wanted to consider one of your plays, which would you recommend?

I suppose it would depend on what their aesthetic is and what their goals are. I've had over two hundred productions of *The Tin Woman*, here and around the world. Since the engine of the show is about a heart transplant, theatres usually do it in conjunction with a local donor organization, so that's a plus for community outreach. Additionally, some of the theatres that have done my musical *A Dog's Life* have arranged "Adoption Days" in their lobbies with local animal shelters. (I *love* that.) On another level, however—and it might be just me—but I feel like, just now, audiences are begging to laugh, to escape. My funniest play, *Beer for Breakfast*, is having an uptick right now as, is my family comedy, the aforementioned *Making God Laugh*. Nothing wrong with laughing!

What surprises were there when another country produced one of your plays?

It's so interesting to me when another culture, that I have no reference for, does one of my shows. To date, I've had productions in the US, Canada, England, Australia, Italy, Serbia, Russia, Germany, Croatia, Iceland, Latvia, Mexico, and others. I love this, since my goal has always been to write about the universal things—things we all experience. I firmly believe that all of us humans, regardless of the accident of our birth, are much, much more alike than different. There really is no "other." A few years ago, a doctoral student in theatre in Taiwan did *The Tin*

"I just always want to see a play so well wrought it's worth my getting off the damn couch."

Woman for her thesis. We communicated a bit with Google Translate (It wasn't that good at the time, yikes!), and she did the show in Mandarin! The university judges attended, adjudicated a performance, and conferred her doctoral degree. I loved it! Recently, my publisher sent me a notice that my play *Now and Then* was being done in Iceland. What on earth do I know about Iceland? Is it even icy? Is there land? But hopefully they did it because I touched on a human thing that we all feel.

What are your thoughts on Artificial Intelligence? In what ways, if any, is it useful to you?

It's funny that you ask, as I've just started a show on AI. (Yes, I know, I'm not the first.) It's pretty interesting now in its nascent stages, but even in the short time I've been messing with it, it's getting better. I let it take a whack at my bio, and it did a good job. And I think it likes me! (Wink emoji here.) There's a lot of talk about it replacing playwrights, which I think is hilarious, as no machine would be stupid enough to want my job. But it also raises discussion as to what exactly is it we as artists do. Is it something a machine could mimic? Does it,

will it ever, have that spark? What is that spark anyway? And would we always know the difference? So far, I've dabbled with it for relatively easy things—research, cover letters, synopses, things like that. And it's not bad. Will it get better? I have an opinion, but I'll keep it to myself for now so as not to offend our future overlords.

We typically see over 350 plays submitted to AACT's NewPlayFest playwriting contest each rotation. What advice do you have for making a script stand out from the other 349?

First, let me say, thank you to all the script readers for considering all those pieces! That's hard work, and we appreciate it so much. We need you!

That said, I see a few trends now that seem to be getting a lot of love. One of them is non-linear storytelling. Jumping around in time and place—even having the characters go from being six years old to sixty, or another person altogether, all in a beat—is an interesting thing when done well. Another is getting to the meat of the show faster. Attention spans are indeed shorter; I know mine is! Ninety-minute plays with no intermission are also pretty trendy (unless the theatre needs to sell drinks at the interval). The empresario Rick Rubin talks about art that, when it arrives, seems like it was just bursting to be born—an idea that makes us say, "Of course, that had to be said!" So easy, right?

Certainly, there is a lot to take up from contemporary culture, shifting interpersonal roles, and world events. I think, handled well, all those can be very rich and very exciting. Unusual but relatable stories, less-heard-from groups, imaginative and compelling dialogue, surprises—all those are good. But my grumpy-old-man advice is to just write a compelling human story and write it very, very well. I think theatre can serve a bunch of purposes: to entertain, to enlighten, to inspire, to galvanize, or just to cause quiet reflection. All of those are completely valid, and none is better than the others. I just always want to see a play that is so well wrought and executed that it reminds me that sitting in a dark room, sharing an experience with a bunch of strangers as actual humans in that room tell me a story, is a unique thing and worth my getting off the damn couch. So, I guess my advice is: Write really good plays.

www.seangrennan.net

Sean Grennan is an internationally produced playwright, librettist, and lyricist, whose work has been seen across the United States and around the globe, including in China, England, Australia, Germany, Serbia, Latvia, Russia, Ireland, Italy, Hungary, and others. A former actor, Grennan brings a deep understanding of the stage to all his work, working to infuse his plays and musicals with heart, humor, and a strong sense of humanity. He began writing for the theatre as co-librettist for the musical Phantom of the Country Opera, which had its world premiere at the Marriott Theatre in Lincolnshire, Illinois. He went on to debut five shows at the American Heartland Theatre in Kansas City, Missouri—comedies Beer for Breakfast and As Long As We Both Shall Live, and his musicals (librettist/lyricist) Married Alive!, A Dog's Life, and Another Night Before Christmas. In addition, he has had four world premieres at Peninsula Players Theatre in Fish Creek, Wisconsin-Making God Laugh, The Tin Woman, Now and Then and A Rock Sails By, which was part of the statewide festival, World Premiere Wisconsin. Grennan's plays are published by Music Theatre International (MTI), Playscripts, Inc., and Dramatists Play Service (DPS).



Bringing Climate into Your Work— Onstage and Off

AACT and ecoAmerica present new Climate Theatre Hub

AACT is pleased to announce our recently formed partnership with ecoAmerica, under their Path to Positive (P2P) Program. This partnership provides the timely opportunity for AACT to engage more deeply with the issue of climate-related disasters for theatres and communities, serving as a strategic starting point to:

- Develop clearer messaging and understanding around climate resilience
- Explore the broader effects of climate change on theatres
- Gather insights and data from our members about their experiences and concerns

In this effort, AACT has joined an exemplary network of community institutions and leaders built and activated by ecoAmerica's P2P Program. Ultimately, we believe this partnership will help AACT and our members strengthen national leadership on climate change and also support our local communities.

Communities across the country are more concerned about the climate than you might think. They want to take action, and they're looking for spaces to talk about it.

Our newly launched online Climate Theatre Hub is here to help you and your theatre explore ways to bring climate into *your* work—

whether it's through the stories you tell on stage, the conversations you spark in the lobby, or the choices you make behind the scenes.

Some of the featured resources on our Climate Theatre Hub include:

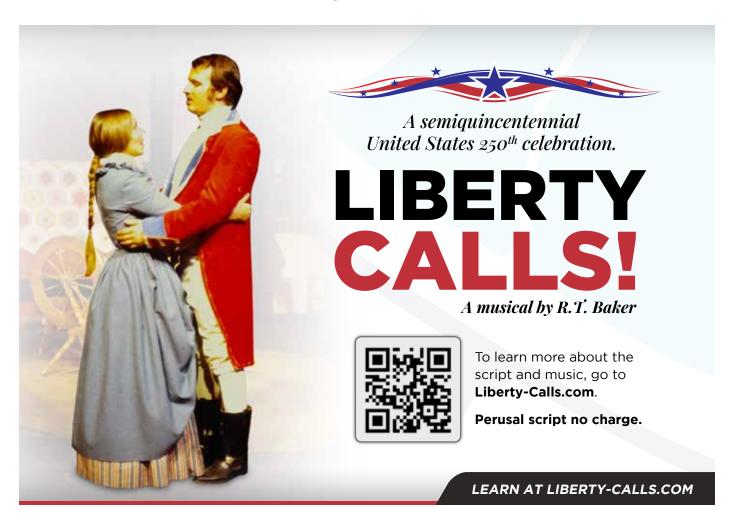
- "Climate at the Dinner Table" Skit Kit a free toolkit designed to take the drama out of climate conversations and put it on the stage.
- Climate Action Sheets a collection of two-page guides that tell you what you need to know and what you need to do.
- Climate Ambassador Training Ambassadors are trained to speak with others and inspire climate action. Equipped with customizable presentations, resources, ongoing training, and support, they give talks and invite others in, in their theatres, schools, communities, and beyond.

You and your theatre can access these resources and more at **aact. org/climate-hub**.

Too many theatres and communities have been negatively impacted by climate change. But a stronger future is not only possible, it's already being built.

And you can be part of it.





The AACT Advantage

Marsha Amato-Greenspan: Finding "family" through community theatre

Lou Ursone

What do the Beatles and Marsha Amato-Greenspan have in common? Liverpool.

OK, so it's not the same country, but it *was* her involvement in community theatre that brought Marsha Amato-Greenspan to Liverpool, Nova Scotia, Canada, for a theatre festival.



"Being involved in community theatre—and AACT—means you have 'family' everywhere," said Amato-Greenspan. On one recent weekend, from her home in Delaware, she was on a train to D.C. to see an immersive theatre presentation in the Congressional Cemetery, and the next day she was in her car for a four-hour drive to see Come From Away in Connecticut.

A native of Virginia and a theatre graduate of Averett University, she has been an active member of AACT for more than 20 years. She is a true believer in community theatre: "The first thing I look for in a place to live is a community theatre," she said. Even during a nine-month work assignment in Massachusetts, she found a community theatre to perform with in nearby Rhode Island.

For more than 30 years, Amato-Greenspan has been involved with many theatres. She is currently President of the Board of Forge Theatre in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania, and serves as Treasurer of The Barnstormers Theatre in nearby Ridley Park, Pennsylvania. She's also an adjudicator in Region II—New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland and elsewhere.

"These theatres are all run with volunteers, with very small budgets," she explained. "But we're theatre people, we're resourceful, we solve problems"—one of the many reasons she stays involved with AACT.

It was Amato-Greenspan's involvement in the Eastern States Theater Association (ESTA) and the Pennsylvania Association of Community Theatres (PACT) that led to her participation in AACT. Now, 22 years later, she still believes in its value.

"The networking, for me, is probably number one, because I want to hear how other people are doing things, and to see how we can incorporate those ideas into what we're doing," she said. She loves hearing what other theatres are doing, how they are overcoming problems, how they are surviving.

She has attended several AACTFest events, even though the expense of traveling far and taking time off from work sometimes makes attendance more challenging. But the rewards are worth it, she says, noting that the AACTFest 2025 vendor gallery was the best one ever, featuring lots of great resources for theatres. There she met Ludus co-founder Kevin Schneider, and has since shared what she learned with almost every community theatre she works with.

"The discounts available through AACT—like [those offered from] MTI—are great, and especially helpful for those on a shoestring budget, or just starting out," Amato-Greenspan said.

Among the networking opportunities that AACT provides, Amato-Greenspan cites the AACT Community Theatre Resource Facebook group. "If you're looking for a new ticketing platform, or suggestions for equipment, you can find someone to talk to," she said.

Amato-Greenspan said, and so is especially grateful for learning opportunities AACT provides: "I'm about education in the theatre—about learning and getting people information they need to know," she said, pointing to festivals as a prime learning experience. It was through AACT festivals that she met long-time AACT member Sherman C. Ward Jr., and assisted with the development of an original works festival to support playwrights—now the Sherman C. Ward Jr. ESTA Original Works Festival.

Amato-Greenspan is an active advocate for AACT membership. On a recent trip with a friend through North Carolina, their car broke down—as luck would have it, near the local community theatre. They decided to stay and see the show. During intermission she started talking with theatre staff, and was soon explaining why they should get involved in AACT.

Speaking of which, if you're not a member, don't you think it's time that *you* join, too?





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Mondial du Théâtre 2025

The Stage as Passport to the World

Kelli McLoud-Schingen

The excitement was palpable. People jostled to find the best view, a symphony of languages filled the air, and gasps rippled through the crowd as members of Monaco's royal family and political leadership arrived to cut the ribbon and officially open what many call the "Olympics of Amateur Theatre." As a first-time attendee, I felt the thrill from head to toe.

For a week in August 2025, Monaco once again became a vibrant crossroads of culture, storytelling, and stagecraft for the 18th edition of the Mondial du Théâtre. A longstanding jewel in the calendar of international amateur theatre, this non-competitive festival reaffirms its founding mission: to celebrate voices from across the globe in a spirit of learning, sharing, and artistic dialogue.

Established in 1957, the Mondial du Théâtre is no ordinary festival. It isn't about prizes or rankings. Instead, it honors diversity of expression and reveals the extraordinary power of amateur theatre to reach across language, geography, and culture—reminding us of the oneness of humanity.

The Global Showcase

This year, troupes from 18 countries from five continents were selected to participate: the United States, Cuba, Slovakia, Italy, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Spain, Japan, the Central African Republic (which was unable to perform due to visa complications), France, Finland, Armenia, Indonesia, Latvia, New Zealand, Lithuania, Morocco, and the Philippines. Each troupe presented its work in its native language, no language or a combination of languages, performing on two consecutive evenings at either the Théâtre des Variétés or the Théâtre Princesse Grace. Three different shows were staged each night, free and open to the public (though tickets were required).

In total, the festival welcomed nearly 500 participants from more than 50 countries. AACT was well represented with five official delegates—Kristofer Geddie, Jim Walker, Steven Butler, Beverly Lord, and Alyssa Goudy—and I was proud to join them in my role as both a second-year AITA/IATA Councilor and Chair of AACT's International Committee.

Exchanges, Workshops, and Performances

The festival was rich with opportunities for learning and cultural exchange beyond the evening shows. Each morning, *colloquia* followed the premiere performances, skillfully led by Sanna Saarela from Finland and Lilian Lloyd from France. These sessions brought together actors, directors, critics, and spectators to debrief, debate, share practices, and explore creative processes.

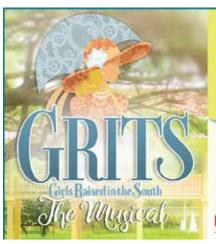
Workshops added even more depth, with themes such as "Theatre is a Painting that Moves"—where artists transformed famous paintings like Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa* into living theatre—and "Myths On Stage," which drew on Greek mythology to

The stage need not crown the 'best' but can uplift the many.

practice choral voice, movement, and staging. Meanwhile, the Global Village offered a space for informal exchanges, shared meals, and the kind of cross-cultural camaraderie that defines the Mondial experience.

Another feature of the festival is the AITA/IATA (International Association of Theatre Amateurs) Annual Congress. New to the congress this year was a presentation on research of Amateur Theatres in Spain, a networking forum led by me and the incoming AITA/IATA President, Sofia Wegelius. The membership of AITA/IATA voted to elect three new members from the Council (representing Belgium, Hungary, and Portugal), confirm Sofia Wegelius as the new President, and support the upcoming AITA/IATA International Festivals in Antwerp, Belgium, in August 2026 and Wilmington, New Zealand, in March 2027.

The performances themselves were dazzling in their variety and heart. Armenia brought a magical blend of puppetry, poetry, and prose inspired by Charles Bukowski. Italy shared a moving *commedia dell'arte* piece about aging with a partner, while Cuba offered a vibrant folklore piece inspired by the true story of Yarini Ponce de León, woven with Yoruba mythology.



A hilarious musical snapshot of the south by Erica Allen McGee!

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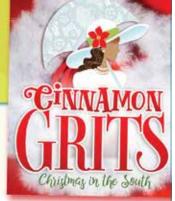
Original country, do wop, R&B and gospel songs will have audiences tapping toes and whistlin' tunes!

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Theater Producer "Lewis Grizzard: In His Own Words"



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Some of my personal standouts included:

- The technically brilliant and joyful A Man of No Importance from the UK's Scrambled Egg Theatre.
- The mesmerizing 13 of September from the Philippines.
- The breathtaking movement and provocative story of Playing God from Slovakia.
- The simply staged yet deeply affecting Out of Mind from New Zealand.
- And, of course, the tragically timely Pass Over from the United States, the winner of Overall Outstanding Production at AACTFest 2023, presented by Stage Left Theatre of Spokane, Washington.

Ask any delegate or attendee, though, and you'll hear different favorites—proof of the festival's richness and variety.

The Festival's Impact

The 2025 Mondial du Théâtre was more than a festival—it was an affirmation of theatre's ability to bring people together across differences, to amplify unique voices, and to remind us that the stage need not crown the "best" but can uplift the many. Monaco's tradition of hospitality and cultural openness gave this moment a powerful frame. For any theatre lover—spectator or maker—this is an experience to witness, or better yet, to take part in. So mark your calendars now for August 2029.

As Chair of AACT's International Committee, I encourage more companies to engage in international exchange. Upcoming opportunities include:

- AACT WorldFest June 2026
- "Louder Together" AITA/IATA Children's and Youth Festival – Antwerp, Belgium, August 2026
- "Standing on the Edge" AITA/IATA International Theatre Festival - Wellington, New Zealand, March 2027

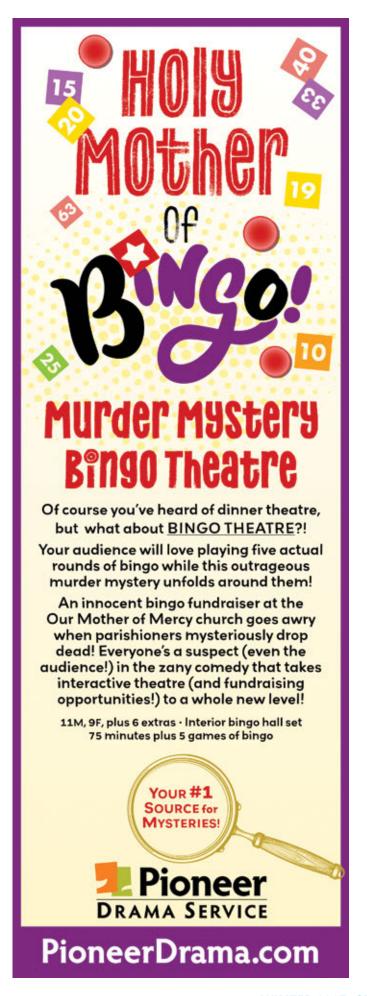
For members of AACT, the Mondial du Théâtre is both a celebration and an invitation: What can we learn from these performances? What stories are we not yet telling at home that could resonate abroad? And how might the example of the Mondial inspire our own festivals—to be more generous, more diverse, more open?

I look forward to the next festival in 2029 and the enduring power of amateur theatre to bridge cultural divides and celebrate shared humanity. Let's let the energy of the Mondial festival carry through to the much-anticipated return of AACT WorldFest in Venice next summer. I will be there, will you?



Kelli McLoud-Schingen, based in Tulsa, OK, holds an MA in Cross Cultural Studies and a BA in Communications, with a minor in Theatre. Her theatre training was at Aurora University, Roosevelt University (1 year toward an MFA), and the Oxford School of Drama in Oxford England. Kelli has directed since 1987 and has been on stage since 1975. In 2017 Kelli founded World Stage theatre Company, a global social justice theatre company in Tulsa. Kelli serves on the AITA/IATA council and proudly serves on the AACT Board of Directors.





Inclusivity in Theatre

Third Act: Seniors Find Empowerment and a Spotlight on Stage

Quiana Clark-Roland

In May 2025, theatrical licensor Music Theatre International (MTI) announced the official launch of Broadway Senior $^{\text{TM}}$ —a collection of musicals specifically developed for the needs and abilities of many older adult performers.

Broadway Senior adaptations feature shortened running times, specific production resources, and adjustments to tempos and keys in musical numbers. These changes ensure that all older adults can participate comfortably, express themselves creatively, and perform to the best of their abilities, regardless of prior experience. Broadway Senior musicals are designed for the needs of community theatres, assisted living communities, community centers, and religious groups.

There are currently five Broadway Senior musicals available for licensing: The Music Man SR., Guys and Dolls SR., Singin' in the Rain SR., Fiddler on the Roof SR., and Into the Woods SR. Each musical has a running time of approximately 60 minutes. Licensed organizations receive everything they need to mount a production, including scripts, performance tracks, and a production guide with extensive notes from theatre experts accustomed to working with older performers.

A Decade of Development

It took over 10 years of development with theatres and senior facilities from across the country to reach this point. With that in mind, we

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interviewed three AACT member theatres from across the country at various points in their journey to learn more about their experiences and the lessons they learned.

In 2014, MTI first piloted *Guys and Dolls SR*. at the Lincoln Playhouse in Lincoln, Nebraska, under the leadership of Executive Director Morrie Enders.

"I was very happy to be instrumental in helping them by serving as a test theatre with boots on the ground for research and development," said Enders, who went on to produce *The Music Man SR*. in 2015, *Fiddler on the Roof SR*. in 2016, and *Singin' in the Rain SR*. in 2018.



Guys and Dolls SR. at the Lincoln Playhouse

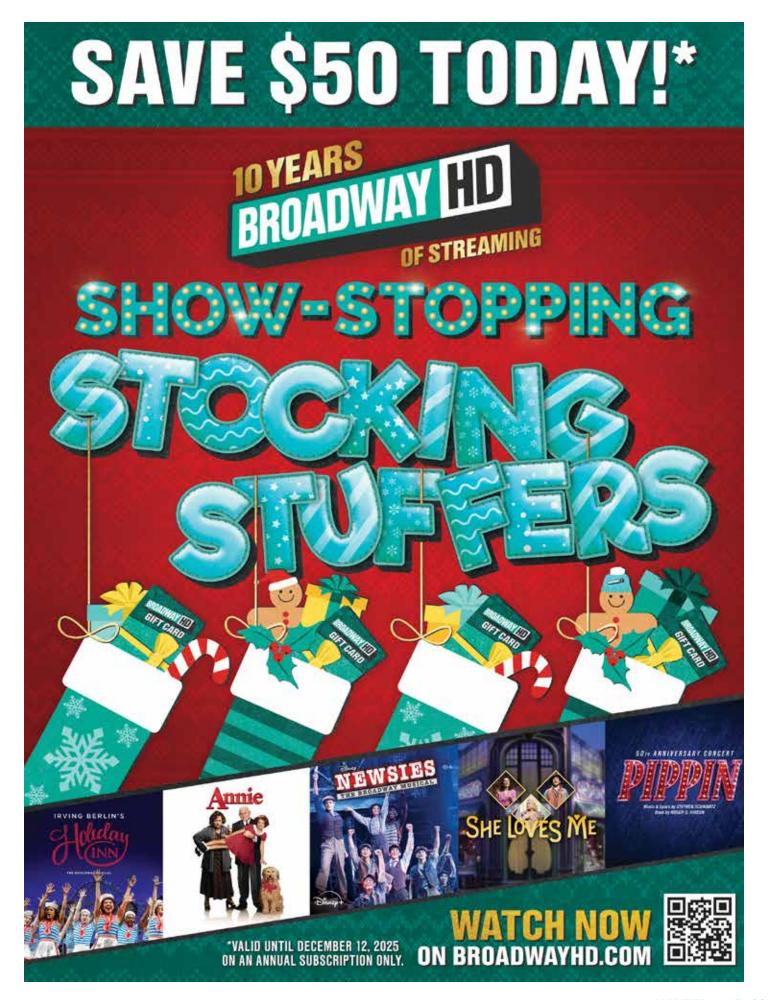
"As I was doing these, I kept sending feedback to MTI, which they were able to use to build upon the Senior series," he explains. "The shows were performed by our senior group, called the Radioactive Players, which had begun with radio scripts, like *The War of the Worlds*, and then advanced to produce staged senior works."

Artistic Director Kristy Meanor of the Wetumpka Depot Players, based in Wetumpka, Alabama was part of MTI's pilot launch for the Broadway Senior Collection in 2019, as their Encore Players presented *The Music Man SR*.

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Fiddler on the Roof SR. at the Lincoln Playhouse





Wetumpka Depot Players production of The Music Man SR.

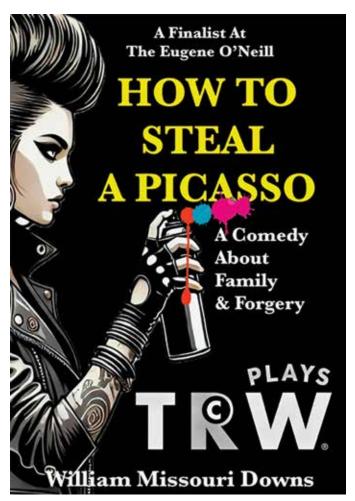
"At the time, the Encore Players were an all-female ensemble," Meanor said, "but that didn't stop them from tackling this beloved musical. Their creativity and commitment carried the production forward, and the show was a tremendous success." They joked about how progressive they were for moving forward with an all-women cast."

Six years later, with the official launch of Broadway Senior™, the StageWorks Theatre Group in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, produced Guys and Dolls

SR. in October 2025. Founder and Artistic Director Jo Ann Ventor saw this as a new opportunity to serve and broaden their community outreach, helping people of all ages enrich themselves through theatre.

Insights Gained from Experience

We asked what advice these theatres would give to other companies looking to launch similar programs to engage and reach senior populations.





"Start with enthusiasm and patience," Meanor said. "Choose material that excites participants and gives them confidence. Be flexible with rehearsal processes and creative casting solutions—don't be afraid to reimagine roles or adapt staging to fit your ensemble's strengths. Most importantly, treat your senior performers as artists, first and foremost. Their stories, talent, and passion will not only enrich your stage but also inspire your entire community."

Ventor emphasized how important it was to begin by speaking with the constituency she was trying to serve and cast. In her case, it was testing the waters, "because, I wasn't sure if enough people would be interested," she said. "To gauge interest and find talent, we went out into the community. We did presentations at senior facilities and explained what we wanted to do. We also contacted senior center activity directors to help spread the word. Since many of our seniors were not on social media or tech-savvy, it was important to go to them directly."

She also found that many seniors were intimidated and scared to try, because they didn't know what to expect, noting that "some were worried about their physical and mental limitations, such as poor eyesight or limited memory. Going out into the community was a great way to explain our project and what would be expected of the cast. They also needed to know who the audience might be, and we reassured them about the friendly and supportive nature of these performances."

Casting and directing a senior show is clearly different from an all-ages show, and our theatres offered some thoughts on what worked best for them:

- Accommodate limited tech savviness: Provide printed, bound scripts instead of digital copies.
- Improve music readability: Create simplified lead sheets and scores (with necessary permissions) to improve readability for musicians.
- Schedule rehearsal times carefully: Book daytime rehearsals
 when possible, for better comfort and accessibility.

- Offer matinee-only performances: Matinees make it easier for performers, as well as for friends and family to attend.
- Prioritize easy access & parking: Select a rehearsal space with easy, close parking and no steps for entrance. Chose a performance venue with accessibility from the parking lot to the theatre, as well—including a green room on the same level, to avoid stairs.

Remarkable Results For All Involved

When asked how this program impacted both participants and the organization, Meanor said, "For the participants, the experience was empowering. They embraced roles that challenged them musically, physically, and creatively, proving that age is never a barrier to telling great stories on stage. For our theatre, the program reinforced our mission of inclusivity—offering meaningful opportunities for seniors to engage in live theatre while deepening our commitment to diverse community programming."

The Encore Players had already become an important and enduring branch of the Wetumpka Depot's programming, but "the MTI Senior production opened doors to new participants, strengthened bonds among long-time members, and gave us a fresh way to serve a vital segment of our community," Meanor said. "It also broadened our audience base, as friends, families, and peers of the participants eagerly came to support them."

All the participating theatres said that the intergenerational benefits are one of the key rewards of producing these shows. They bridge the gap between ages, help change perceptions of what seniors can do, and provide opportunities to learn from them.

"It was so inspiring to see them create their own theatre family," said Jo Ann Ventor, of the StageWorks Theatre Group. "What I am hearing from the cast is how excited they are to have grandchildren and friends watching them, instead of them always doing the watching. They are getting a second chance to do something they love."

An additional benefit for the producing theatres is that these productions help bring in new audiences, whether to support the initiative or to be there for their friends and family members.

"The audience loved it," said Morrie Enders. "They loved seeing a 70-year-old Winthrop in *The Music Man*. They loved the senior women singing 'A Bushel and a Peck' from Guys and Dolls. They love seeing senior citizens having a great time. When the actors go home, they talk about it. They practice with their friends, they practice with their spouses, they practice with their grandchildren. Many of those people then come to our theatre for the first time to see them perform."



Wetumpka Depot Players production of The Music Man SR.

Final Thoughts

As our theatres found, the importance of senior theatre extends beyond the participants by actively engaging and enriching the wider community. It's proof that creativity and the desire for self-expression has no age limit.

That's also the way that Freddie Gershon of Music Theatre International describes Broadway Senior—as "a program that puts older adults center stage. It empowers people to not simply experience theatre as an audience member or a volunteer—but to be the creators, the singers, the storytellers. For some, they're taking the stage for the first time. For others, they're returning to a passion they didn't know could be available to them in the third act of life."

To learn more about MTI Broadway Senior visit mtishows.com/ broadway-senior-about. For more educational resources for senior theatre, visit ArtAge Senior Theatre Resource Center at seniortheatre. aact.org/comments



Member Theatre Hub

For He's a Jolly Good Fellow!

Making the Most of a Year-long Fellowship

Lou Ursone

For TheaterWorks in Peoria, Arizona, the goal was clear—expand its educational offerings, which it saw as the greatest opportunity for growth.

That led the company's Executive Director, Chris Hamby, to apply for—and be awarded—a year-long tenure as a Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust Fellow. Through a rigorous application and screening process, Hamby was selected as one of seven fellows for 2025—and he has undoubtedly made the most of this \$50,000 experience for his theatre.

"You get to create your own pathway here... You get to decide what you're going to do."

The Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust honors the commitment of its founder in supporting organizations that enrich health, well-being, and opportunity for the people of Maricopa County, Arizona.

Of special importance to Hamby, Fellows are encouraged to explore educational and professional programs, visit model program sites, and meet with thought leaders across the nation.

Evolving Goals in a Changing Landscape

While Hamby entered this process intending to expand education at TheaterWorks, he soon discovered, he said, that "the state of education in our country is vastly different than it was a year ago." As a result, his ideas on how TheaterWorks should proceed changed a bit, as he explored possible directions his company could take.



Chris Hamby

"The cool thing about the Piper Fellowship is that you get to create your own pathway. They don't tell you what's going to happen. You get to decide what you're going to do."

Significantly, the fellowship gave him the opportunity to meet with other theatre leaders across the country, including the Seattle Children's Theatre, Tacoma Musical Playhouse, Tacoma Little Theatre, Hale Centre Theatre in Sandy, Utah, and Curtain Call in Stamford, Connecticut.

Connecting with other theatres across the country was a major benefit, he said. So was a visit to one of the nation's best-respected regional theatres—the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis—something he was really looking forward to.

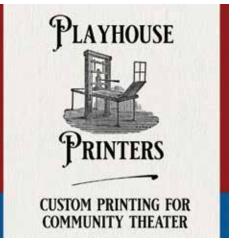
"I've seen shows there, but never had a chance to get to meet their team and learn about their operations," Hamby said.

While this year-long, self-created program of study has been great for Hamby, he emphasizes how the learning extended to his staff as well.

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"Ten of us from TheaterWorks were able to visit the incredible operations of the Hale Centre," he noted after the Utah visit. "One obvious lesson we learned is that the number of zeros in a theatre's budget doesn't really change the challenges that we all face in keeping our theatres alive."

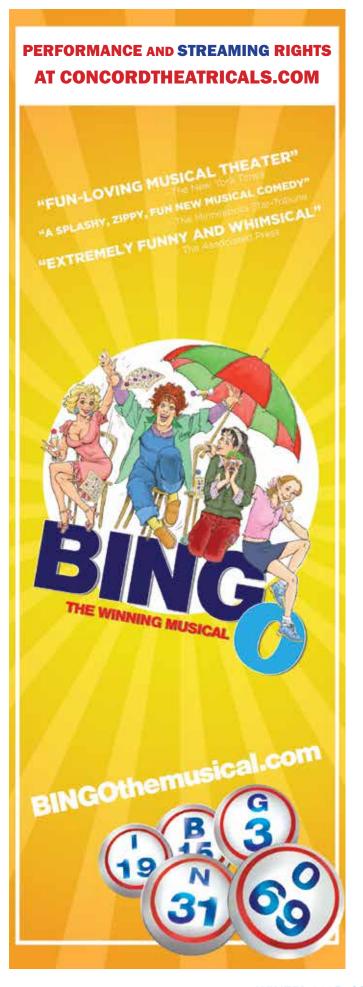
He was also able to take his team to the AACT Community Theatre Management Conference (as well as AACTFest), held in Des Moines this past June. Each staff member left those two programs uplifted and energized to do great work.



Chris, Paul Pedersen, Mike Reynolds, and Chris Serface in Tacoma, Washington

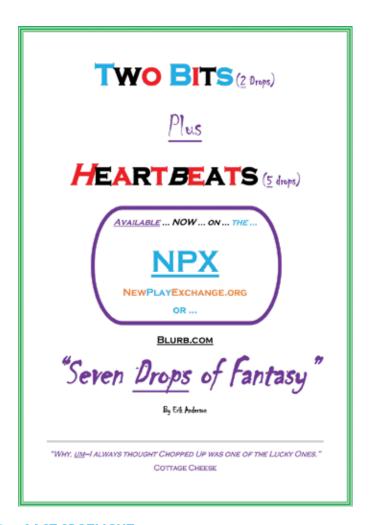
continued on page 34 >







Chris in front of Seattle Children's Theatre



"It has been an amazing experience," Hamby said, including his attendance at various workshops offered by Disney Institute, The Shannon Leadership Institute, Institute for Charitable Giving, and several more. "Learning about guest services/guest relations from the people at Universal Studios was a great experience for our team," he added.

Through his many site visits around the country, Hamby has come to realize that "Community theatre in the United States is suffering less than the huge institutional theatres. There is a greater resilience in the community theatre world."

"The number of zeros in a theatre's budget doesn't really change the challenges that we all face in keeping our theatres alive."

Building a Local Network with Lasting Value

Working with, and learning from, the cohort of Piper Fellows also expanded Hamby's local network of nonprofit professionals outside the arts community—"and I know strategic partnerships are likely to come from this. Our cohort gets together monthly to share ideas and experiences, and that has been terrific. We'll also be part of the larger alumni group of about 100 Piper Fellows who meet every other month. That will keep us up





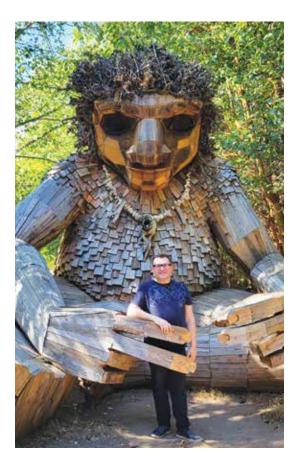
Chris, Lou Ursone, and Paul Pedersen in Stamford, Connecticut

to date on what's happening locally, statewide, and nationally," Hamby said.

Since the beginning of 2025, Hamby has spent about 90 days out of the office—32 of them during July and August. "It was a huge commitment for our organization to support me in this," Hamby said, but is confident that TheaterWorks will reap the benefits of his time away for years to come.

One major programmatic idea that Hamby and his staff are now pursuing is creating more immersive program options.

"For-profit businesses in the area have developed a variety of 90-minute-or-so events. That's given us some ideas of additional ways to use our black box space," he said.



Chris on Bainbridge Island, near Seattle Washington, in front of Pia the Peacekeeper sculpture by Thomas Dambo.

Looking back at his nine months as a fellow, Hamby said, "I hope what I learn can be a resource to other theaters. If there's another theater, whether it's just starting out or there's a theater that's in a growth phase, hopefully, some of the things that I learned I can share."

What's Next

As if a year-long program of educational opportunities for Hamby and his staff weren't enough, TheaterWorks is now eligible to apply for a \$50,000 grant from the Piper Foundation to help support the creation of a series of new programs.

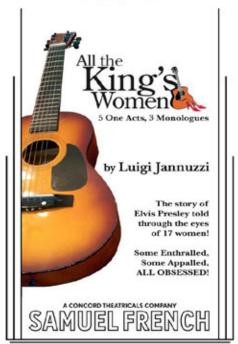
To paraphrase a lyric from *The Music Man*, this is a perfect example of not having to pay the piper—the piper pays him.



Lou Ursone is the Executive Director of Curtain Call, Inc. in Stamford, Connecticut, a member of the AACT Board of Directors, and serves on the Spotlight Editorial Team.



"FROM CALIFORNIA TO AUSTRALIA, this play rocks!"



Publisher: ConcordTheatricals.com Playwright: LuigiJannuzzi.com

Regionally Speaking from Region V

Chaz Coberly

Each of AACT's 11 designated Regions is led by a dedicated Regional Representative, who serves on the AACT Board of Directors. This structure ensures that theatres and members from across the country and U.S. military overseas are connected and represented, fostering collaboration and support within the community theatre network. Chaz Coberly is the new Representative for Region V (Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota).

While I am new to the role of Regional Rep, my time with AACT goes back six years when I was still in Salina, Kansas. We were fortunate enough to take our production of *Silent Sky* all the way to AACTFest in Gettysburg, and it did well, winning multiple awards. The chance to get outside my little bubble and see excellent works from across the country was tremendous.

My current role is Artistic Director of Manhattan Arts Center in Manhattan, Kansas, where I oversee our Mainstage Theatre operations. As an arts center, we also offer visual arts classes and display artwork in our gallery.

So, what is happening in the region? Region V encompasses the great geographic expanse of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas. Currently, only Minnesota and Iowa have active state associations—and strong ones at that.

My overall goal for the region over these next couple of years is to get one or two more state associations up and running, build a stronger Region V network, and generally raise awareness of AACT throughout the region.

My first order of business has been to reactivate the Association of Kansas Theatres, which lapsed in 2014-2015 for failure to file. With the help of modern technology—and a bit of borderline harassment of theatre leaders by me to see if they would like to join—we now have approximately 20 theatres involved in reigniting the organization.

We have met twice, redrafted bylaws, and at our September 29 meeting, elected a nine-member board and officers (I will be serving as President for the first term.) We had our first official board meeting

REFORE
Peter Colley

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Concord

October 28, and have filed reinstatement paperwork with the Kansas Secretary of State and IRS to reinstate our association as a 501(c)(3). Things are moving forward, with plans for a March conference in Salina.

With Kansas underway, I soon plan to turn my attention to Nebraska, which had an association that did not survive Covid. Perhaps we can get some momentum brewing there, as well.

Building the Network

In addition to working on state associations, I have appointed three new State Contacts:

- Kansas: Ali Schade, Theatre Salina
- Nebraska: Tyler Rinne, Beatrice Community Players
- Iowa: David Kilpatrick, Des Moines Community Playhouse.

Minnesota and Missouri have had the same State Contacts for many years—Larry Pint and Nancy Eppert, respectively. I am still working on North and South Dakota.

Looking Ahead

Even with only a few months under my belt, I think we are off to an excellent start. If you are a fellow Region V'er and have any questions or are interested in helping, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at ad@manhattanarts.org.

Thanks, everyone!

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American Association of Community Theatre

in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift, or other legacy gift.

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To learn more about AACT's Legacy Society, visit aact.org/legacy or contact the AACT office at info@aact.org



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Advocacy Matters

The Johnson Amendment and Nonprofit Nonpartisanship

Qiana Clark-Roland

Proposed Changes to Nonprofit Activity Rules

One congressional proposal that has drawn attention from the nonprofit sector is the Free Speech Fairness Act (S.1205/H.R. 2501): aact.org/johnson. Proponents argue the act extends free speech rights to religious and other nonprofit organizations. However, many nonprofit advocates express concern that altering current rules could increase political polarization and cause mission drift.

The Current Law: The Johnson Amendment

A provision in the federal tax code, Section 501(c)(3)—the Johnson Amendment—states that, a charitable nonprofit may "not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements), any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office."

Nonpartisan status allows nonprofits to serve as neutral spaces where communities can address problems without political division.

Supporters of this rule argue that it protects the integrity and effectiveness of charitable nonprofits by ensuring they remain focused on their missions and above political partisanship. They contend this nonpartisan status allows nonprofits to serve as neutral spaces where communities can address problems without political division.

Concerns from the Nonprofit Sector

Leading advocacy groups, such as the National Council of Nonprofits and Americans for the Arts, have raised concerns that proposals like the Free Speech Fairness Act could put nonprofits at risk and hinder their ability to serve their missions effectively.

Potential Consequences Cited by Opponents

Opponents of changing the Johnson Amendment suggest that politicizing nonprofits could have several adverse consequences, including:

• **Erosion of public trust:** Donors might turn away from the charitable sector if it becomes perceived as

- politically partisan, undermining the public's trust in organizations dedicated to the public good.
- Internal division: Nonprofit boards could become split over endorsing political candidates, diverting attention and resources away from the organization's core mission.
- Mission drift: Organizations could face pressure from board members or major donors to take sides in elections, potentially compromising their mission-based work.
- Coercion and pressure: Nonprofit leaders could be pressured to use their platforms to endorse candidates, potentially subjecting their organizations to political repercussions.

It is believed that we may see an increase in proposed legislation such as the Free Speech Fairness Act. We encourage AACT members to research this bill and others to see how this may impact your community and mission. Most importantly, we encourage you to build a relationship with your representative. This is the foundation for effective advocacy, helping to ensure they understand your needs, and holding them accountable to the voters they represent.

Source:

National Council of Nonprofits - "Protecting the Johnson Amendment and Nonprofit Nonpartisanship" aact.org/johnson2



Your voice belongs in **Spotlight**



Letters to the Editor

Brief, constructive notes from our readers... your wins, questions, and responses to recent *Spotlight* pieces. Share your insights or theatre updates. Your letter might appear in the next issue!



Crossword

Lynn Nelson

It's a Musical!

Across

- 1. Chit
- 5. Aquarius musical
- 9. Two-legged creature
- 14. Playwright Yasmina
- 15. Choir voice
- 16. Gibson garnish
- 17. Biz bigwig
- 18. Footnote word
- 19. Total
- 20. 1966 Tony winner
- 23. Swelling
- 24. World's longest river
- 25. Warning signal
- 29. Dull and heavy
- 33. Flight safety agency
- 36. Frozen precipitation
- 38. Tiny amount
- 39. Ethel Merman hit
- 43. Imminent
- 44. Wild and untamed
- 45. Bro's counterpart
- 46. Crave, in the South
- 49. Breaks
- 51. Stay put
- 53. Moscow money
- 57. One Day More!
- 61. Round bread loaf
- 63. Relocate
- 64. Meadow sounds
- 65. To any degree
- 66. Foreshadow
- 67. Better than ____
- 68. Bridge support
- 69. Tirade
- 70. Refuse

Down

- 1. Rich French cream
- 2. Group of six
- 3. A nitrene
- 4. 2009 AACTFest site
- 5. fellow, well met!
- 6. Hawkeye actor
- 7. Single thing or object
- 8. Caesar, the noblest ____
- 9. Nubby textured fabric

- 14 15 16 17 18 20 21 22 23 24 25 27 28 29 32 31 38 35 36 37 33 34 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 49 50 46 48 53 51 52 55 56 60 57 58 59 63 61 62 64 65 66 67 68 70 69
 - 10. Love is ____
 - 11. Middle Eastern flatbread
 - 12. Job posting letters
 - 13. Medical directive letters
 - 21. Not genuine
 - 22. Nada
 - 26. H.S. math course
 - 27. Coral ridge
 - 28. Poet's concern
 - 30. Sore feet
 - 31. Decorative case
 - 32. Grandmothers
- 33. Vex, in Scotland
- 34. Dwarf buffalo
- 35. Soon, to a bard
- 37. Phoenician port
- 40. Quill dipping places
- 41. Western treaty grp.

- 42. Extreme
- 47. Artists' stands
- 48. Edge
- 50. Filled in
- 52. Indonesian island
- 54. Bright flame
- 55. Acquire knowledge
- 56. School assignment
- 57. Island feast
- 58. "Brave New World" drug
- 59 Balanced
- 60. Larson masterpiece
- 61. Cave dweller
- 62. Over the road (abbr.)

Crossword answers on page 41

Spotlight on Safety Engaging theatre staff and volunteers in risk control

Presented by Church Mutual Insurance Company, S.I. (a stock insurer)1

In theatre, the magic of live production is built on collaboration, creativity, and precision. But behind the scenes, safety plays a starring role. From rigging lights and managing crowds to building sets and navigating backstage traffic, every aspect of theatre operations carries risk. That's why engaging your staff, crew, and volunteers in risk control isn't just smart—it's essential.

Creating a culture of safety in a theatre doesn't mean sacrificing artistry. It means ensuring everyone—from the box office to the fly rail—is empowered to protect themselves, each other, and the audience.

Engagement Is The Key to Safer Productions

Even the most comprehensive safety protocols won't work if they're ignored or misunderstood. In a theatre, where roles shift and volunteers rotate frequently, engagement is the glue that holds your safety efforts together. When your team is actively involved in risk control, they're more likely to:

- Identify hazards early. A vigilant crew can spot loose cables, unstable platforms, or blocked exits before they become serious issues.
- Follow best practices. When safety is part of the theatre's culture, guidelines become second nature—like checking harnesses before a fly cue or maintaining clear backstage pathways.
- Take ownership. Engaged individuals don't just follow rules—they help improve them, creating smarter, more relevant safety solutions.



Building a Safety-First Culture

Theatre is a fast-paced, ever-changing environment. To make safety stick, it needs to be woven into the fabric of your operations. Here's how to make that happen:

- 1. Set the stage with clear protocols. Start by establishing safety procedures that are easy to understand and consistently reinforced. In a theatre setting, this might include:
 - Routine training: Offer regular sessions on backstage safety, emergency exits, fire prevention, and equipment handling. Use hands-on demonstrations and department-specific examples to keep it relevant.
 - Accessible resources: Post evacuation maps, emergency contacts, and safety guidelines in dressing rooms, tech booths, and green rooms. Use visual aids and plain language to ensure clarity.
 - Ongoing communication: Reinforce safety messages through pre-show meetings, callboard notices, and internal newsletters. A quick reminder before curtain can go a long way.
- 2. Encourage open dialogue. Theatre thrives on communication—and your safety efforts should too. Create an environment where staff and volunteers feel comfortable speaking up about risks:
 - Regular safety check-ins: Use production meetings or weekly crew huddles to discuss safety concerns and share updates.
 - Anonymous reporting: Provide a way for individuals to report hazards discreetly, especially if they're new or unsure.
 - Act on feedback: Show your team that their input matters by responding to concerns and implementing suggestions.

When people feel heard, they're more likely to stay engaged—and that can help prevent serious incidents.

- 3. Empower safety committees and champions. One of the most effective ways to embed safety into your theatre is through peer leadership. Form a safety committee that includes representatives from different departments—lighting, sound, costumes, front-of-house and more. Their responsibilities might include:
 - Leading peer training: Department-specific sessions led by committee members make

- safety feel more relevant and relatable.
- Conducting safety walks: Regular walkthroughs of the venue can help identify and address risks proactively.
- Rotating leadership: Give different team members a chance to lead, keeping the committee fresh and inclusive.
- Recognizing contributions: Celebrate safety wins and acknowledge those who go above and beyond.

This approach not only improves safety—it builds camaraderie and shared responsibility.

Safer Shows, Smoother Operations

When safety becomes second nature, the benefits ripple across your theatre:

- Fewer incidents mean fewer disruptions to rehearsals and performances.
- Lowered risk of insurance claims can potentially lead to cost savings and better resource allocation.
- Improved morale fosters a more positive, productive environment for everyone.

Ultimately, a safe theatre is also a thriving theatre—where artists, staff, and audiences alike can focus on what matters most: the performance.

Creating a culture of safety in performance theatres takes time, intention, and collaboration. But by engaging your team, clarifying expectations, encouraging dialogue, and celebrating

Crossword Solution



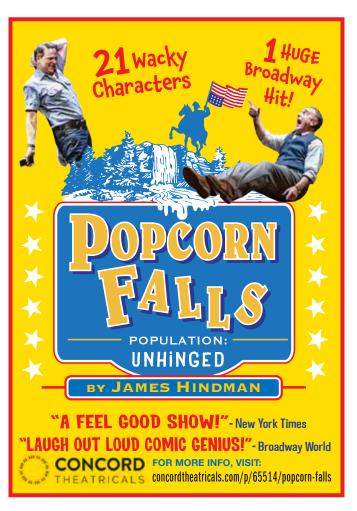
success, you'll build an environment where safety supports—not stifles—creativity.

So, whether you're preparing for opening night or wrapping up a season, remember that safety isn't just a backstage concern it's a shared spotlight.

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Boards in the Spotlight: A Classic Returns

Boards in the Spotlight—the groundbreaking book on building an effective community theatre board—is back, in a newly updated edition from AACT.

Informative and thought-provoking, Boards in the Spotlight covers recruitment, training, and evaluation of board members; defining member roles and responsibilities; dealing with challenging situations (and people); and insuring productive involvement in fundraising and community relations.

Author Twink Lynch, Ph. D. was a nationally known consultant and workshop facilitator in the areas of board governance, long-range planning, and volunteer management. Before her death in 2018, Lynch had worked actively in community theatre for nearly 60 years, gaining a reputation as an inspiring and influential leader. That experience informs every page of Boards in the Spotlight. It also reflects her passion for theatre—and for creating a board that will nurture and sustain an organization.

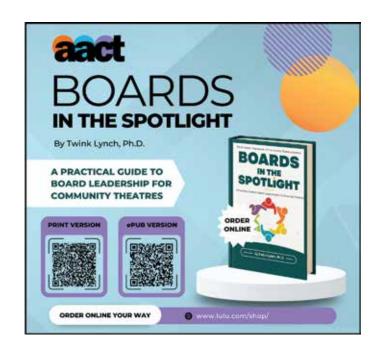
In her foreword, Lynch makes clear "there is no one perfect board formula that will serve as a model for all community theatres. Effective board development will depend upon the resources available in the community, and the stage of development the theatre is currently experiencing." With that in mind, she provides guidance that speaks directly to those different resources and development stages.

The new edition of *Boards in the Spotlight* retains the author's timeless insights and advice, as well as her use of humor and storytelling to make her points. (Chapter titles include "What's Up, Doc?," "We Could All Die Laughing," and "The Top Ten Ways to Kill Off Board Members.")

Updates reflect changes in how many community theatres are structured, and how boards can best use electronic and online tools. Curated lists of recommended books and other resources have been expanded, and Lynch's children have contributed a new foreword and biography of their late mother.

The new edition was edited by Stephen Peithman (Spotlight Assistant Editor and former AACT board member), and reviewed for alignment with current board practices by Mary Doveton (founder and former Executive Director of Theatre Lawrence, Lawrence, Kansas). Both knew and worked with Lynch on the AACT Board, and were committed to retaining her distinctive voice, which is both engaging and direct. Lynch's charts and forms have been retained, as well-many of them now available as MS Word downloads, so they can be customized as needed. The book's new graphic design is the work of AACT staff member Michelle Swink.

Boards in the Spotlight is available in both print and electronic versions. For more information, see below, or visit aact.org/ boards-spotlight.





Plays Without Boundaries

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The Resource Center: Fundraising

Stephen Peithman

Asking for gifts from individuals, companies, or foundations can be a daunting task for those new to it, and experienced fundraisers are always on the lookout for new ideas and strategies. Below you'll find a curated list of helpful resources to help put you on the right path. (To simplify things, we've provided short URLs that will forward you to the specific source pages.)

Online

BoardSource

This nonprofit organization's library of guides, tools, templates, and infographics covers all aspects of fundraising from a board perspective. Downloadable articles include "Fundraising Communications Toolkit for Board Members," "Three Types of Fundraising Campaigns," and "Wrestling with Board Dilemmas: A Good Board That Won't Fundraise." (Along with ones available to all, additional articles are available with BoardSource membership). In-depth publications (PDF or print) include Fundraising Responsibilities of Nonprofit Boards, Fearless Fundraising for Nonprofit Boards, and Engaging Your Board in Fundraising: A Staff's Guide. aact.org/fund1

National Council of Nonprofits

Online resources include a Fundraising and Resource Development page with articles on legal aspects of nonprofit fundraising, tax tips, donor relations, gift acceptance policies, acknowledging and thanking donors, and advice on working with professional fundraising consultants and grant writers. aact.org/fund2

Nonprofit Hub

Here you'll find over 20 free nonprofit how-to guides on fundraising, including "7 Tips on Asking for Donations," "A Guide to Donor Retention," and "The Ultimate Digital Fundraising Guide." All are free to download, but require you to register (free), by providing your name and email address. aact.org/fund3

Arts Consulting Group

While ACG is primarily a provider of executive search, strategic planning, and research services for arts organizations, it also offers articles on board development and related topics in its free digital publication, Arts Insights. You can subscribe, or simply browse past issues for such topics as "Recent Trends in Philanthropic Giving," "Public Funding Resource Guide for Arts and Culture," and "Are You Ready to Launch a Major Fundraising Campaign?" aact.org/fund4

Candid

This helpful site provides comprehensive data and insights to help nonprofits find funders to support their work. (Potential funders also look to Candid's GuideStar service to verify and research nonprofits that are aligned with their priorities.) Of particular interest are Candid's data-driven articles on dealing with the uncertainties of government and foundation funding. Recent titles include "Nonprofit Stats by Congressional District, "Foundations by State: How Much Are They Giving?," "Grant Recipients By State: How Much Are They Getting?," and "Tips For Seeking Foundation Grants In A Time Of Crisis." aact.org/fund5

The Fundraising Authority

This for-profit entity offers a range of free articles on fundraising basics, direct-mail tactics, and donor cultivation, including "How to Collect Compelling Stories to Use in Your Fundraising Work," "Creating Fundraising Systems for Your Nonprofit," and "Stop Looking for a Fundraising Magic Bullet." aact.org/fund6

Print

Online resources typically offer the most up-to-date information on fundraising, but books can delve more deeply into the subject, including case studies of various successful (and unsuccessful) strategies. Most titles below are available from online booksellers, or by order from your local bookstore.

- Boards in the Spotlight. Published by AACT, this highly-praised classic by Twink Lynch Ph.D. has been revised and updated, including guidance on the board's role in fundraising. It offers suggestions for helping theatre board members overcome hesitancy in asking for money, and how they can best support staff or contracted fundraisers. [See page 43 for more information.]
- Boards on Fire: Inspiring Leaders to Raise Money Joyfully, 2nd Edition, by Susan Howlett. [Word & Raby Publishing, 2019]
- Don't Make Me Fundraise!: A Guide for Reluctant Fundraising Volunteers, by Eloise Brice. [Independently published, 2020]
- Effective Fundraising for Nonprofits: Real-World Strategies That Work, 8th Edition, by Ilona Bray J.D. [Nolo, 2025]
- Nonprofit Fundraising Strategies: 7 Strategies to Consistently Secure Funding and Ensure Your Organization Doesn't Fail—Using Grants, Gifts, Digital and More, by James Ruell. [James Ruell Nonprofits, 2023]
- Storytelling: The Secret Sauce of Fundraising Success, 2nd Edition, by Lynn Malzone Ierardi. [Gift Planning Advisor, 2021]

Wiley Publishing offers a variety of books on fundraising for nonprofits, including:

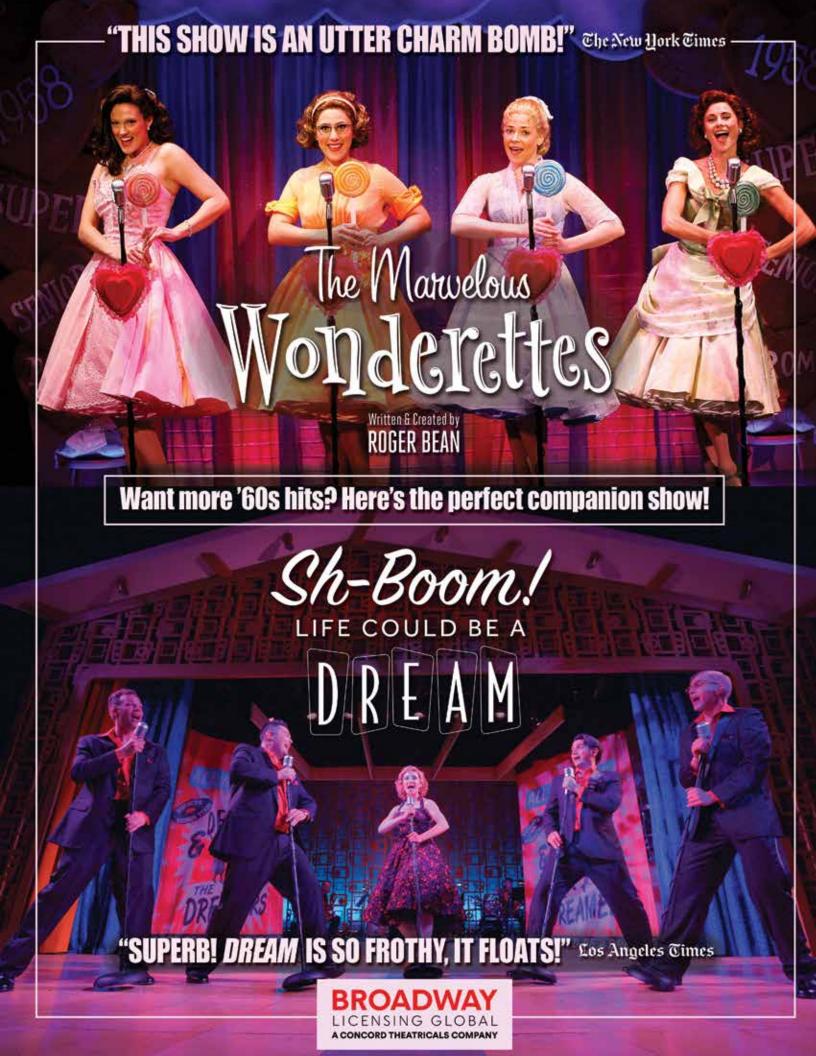
- Achieving Excellence in Fundraising, 5th Edition, by Genevieve G. Shaker, Eugene R. Tempel, Sarah K. Nathan, and Bill Stanczykiewicz. [2022]
- Focused Fundraising: How to Raise Your Sights and Overcome Overload, by Michael Felberbaum and Christopher M. Cannon. [2022]
- Fundraising Principles and Practice, 3rd Edition, by Adrian Sargeant and Jen Shang. [2024]
- Winning Grants Step by Step: The Complete Workbook for Planning, Developing, and Writing Successful Proposals, 6th Edition, by Lynn Jenkins English, Tori O'Neal-McElrath, and Lynn Kanter. [2025]
- These and more titles: aact.org/fund7

Calendar of Events

Dates	Event	St	City	Phone	Web Site
Dec 4, 2025	AACT Virtual Masterclass: Center Stage On Climate		virtual	817-732-3177	aact.org/calendar
Dec 10, 2025	AACT Industry Connections		virtual	817-732-3177	aact.org/calendar
Feb 12-14, 2026	AACT Winter Board Meetings	UT	Sandy	817-732-3177	aact.org/calendar
Feb 13-15, 2025	AACT Winter Theatre Adventure	UT	Sandy	817-732-3177	aact.org/adventure-26

Advertisers

AACT Worldrest 11	McGee Entertainment Grits the Musical
Ruth Baker <i>Liberty Calls</i> 23	Miracle or 2 Productions The Pin Up Girls
Roger Bean <i>The Marvelous Wonderettes & Sh-Boom!</i> 47	Miracle or 2 Productions The Pin Up Girls Christmas Spectacular 28
BINGO The Winning Musical33	Miracle or 2 Productions <i>Popcorn Falls</i>
BroadwayHD29	Music Theatre Internationa Disney's Frozen
Peter Colley I'll Be Back Before Midnight	Marj O'Neill-Butler <i>The Bench Plays</i> 34
Concord Theatricals Spongebob the Musical 5	Pioneer Drama Service Holy Mother of Bingo2
Disney Theatrical Group Dare to Dream JR19	Pioneer Drama Service The Rainbow Fish Musical12
William Missouri Downs How to Steal a Picasso	Playhouse Printers
Dramatic Publishing <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> 25	Kim E. Ruyle Tennessee Wet Rub1
Ellis Jay Theatricals A Christmas Carol - Spirits of Christmas 202537	Show Merch40
Sean Grennan Beer for Breakfast10	Southeastern Theatre Conference14
Heuer Publishing Billy & George2	Summerwind Productions
Historical Emporium33	Theatre Odyssey <i>In Whom We Trust</i>
_uigi Jannuzz All The King's Women35	Theatrical Rights Worldwide
Luigi Jannuzzi A Crazy Little Café Called Love	Tobins Lake Studios24
_eapEventTechnology20	Two Bits + Heartbeats34





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