

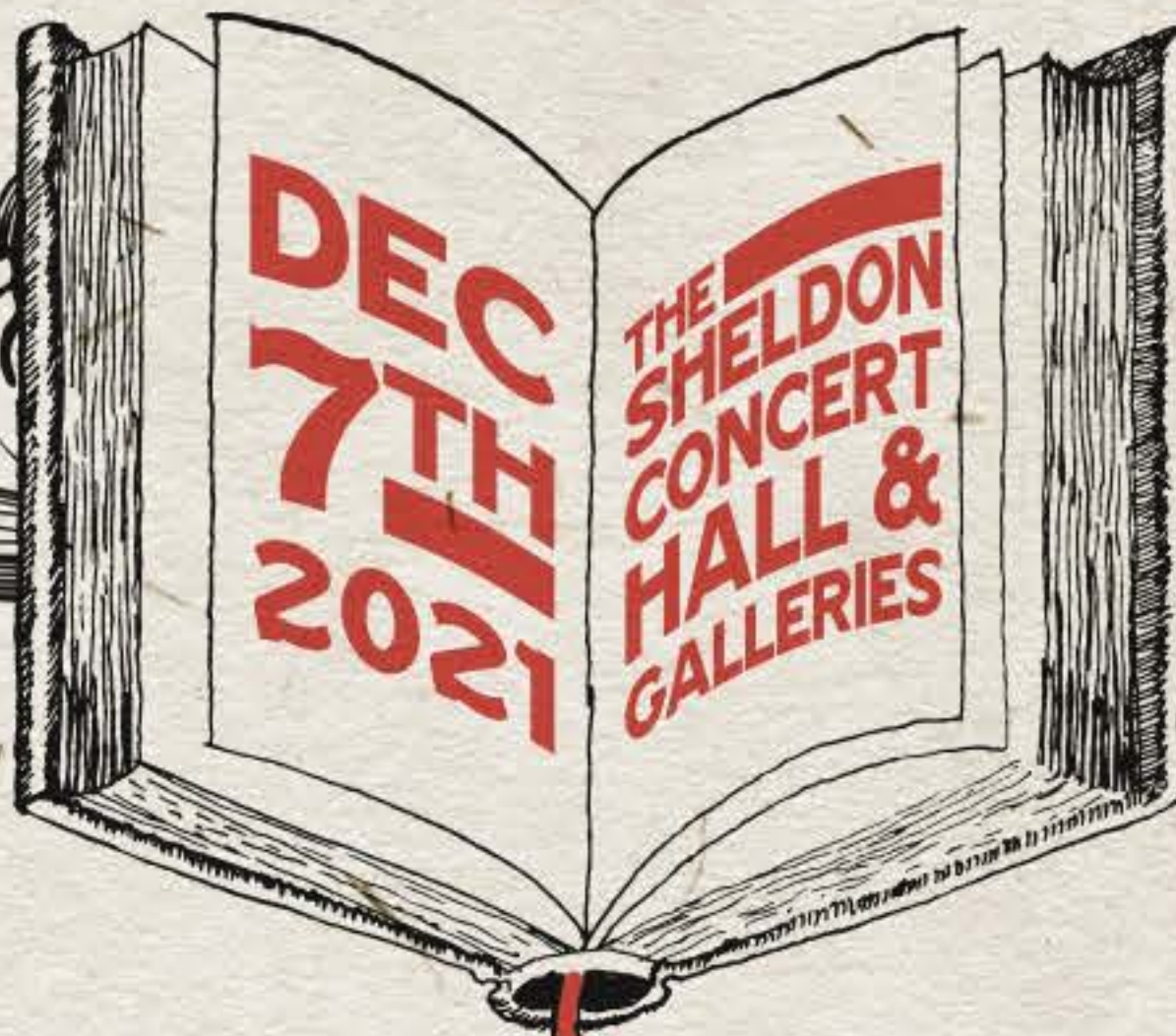


PRESENTS

AN ALL-ST. LOUIS  
READING OF

# A CHRISTMAS CAROL

by  
Charles  
Dickens



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# EVENING PROGRAM

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## 6 PM

**Heavy Hors D'oeuvres Dinner  
For Premium Ticketholders**

*Sheldon Ballroom*

### Menu

Spinach mixed green salad with citrus vinaigrette  
Spinach artichoke dip with pita chips  
Tomato mozzarella caprese salad skewers  
Antipasto skewers  
Empanadas with chipotle mayo  
BBQ meatballs  
Portabella mushroom stacks

*Special Thanks to J's Catering with a Taste of Elegance*

## 8 PM

**Program Featuring Reading of  
Selections from *A Christmas Carol***

*Sheldon Concert Hall*

### Welcome & Opening Remarks

Julia Flood, MTC Artistic Director  
Joe Gfaller, MTC Managing Director  
Ellie Kemper, Actress, Comedienne, and Writer  
Erica Wilson, Vice President of MTC's Board of Directors

### Musical Performance

Denise Thimes and Adaron "Pops" Jackson

### Selections from *A Christmas Carol* with Musical Performances from Caroling St. Louis

**"Marley was dead to begin with..."**

Joe Gfaller, MTC Managing Director

**"A merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!..."**

Vanessa Cooksey, President and CEO of the Regional Arts Commission

**"At length the hour of shutting up the counting-house arrived..."**

James Croft, Leader at the Ethical Society of Saint Louis

**"With a strange, inexplicable dread, Scrooge's glance fell..."**

Ken Page, Actor and Singer

**"Light flashed up in the room upon the instant..."**

Terry Crow, Mayor of University City

**"They were now in the busy thoroughfares of a city..."**

Jacqueline Thompson, Actress, Director, and MTC Associate Artist

**"Then up rose Mrs. Cratchit..."**

Ellie Kemper, Actress, Comedienne, and Writer

**"The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come conducted him..."**

Michael Thanh Tran, Actor and Animator

**"The spirit conveyed Scrooge to an obscure part of town..."**

Casey Nolen, KSDK 5 On Your Side Anchor and Political Editor  
Abby Llorico, KSDK 5 On Your Side Reporter and Multimedia Journalist

**"Scrooge went to church, and walked about the streets..."**

Dr. Joseph Davis, Superintendent of the Ferguson-Florissant School District

**"Scrooge was better than his word..."**

Julia Flood, MTC Artistic Director

### Closing Remarks

Julia Flood, MTC Artistic Director  
Joe Gfaller, MTC Managing Director

### Musical Performance

Denise Thimes and Adaron "Pops" Jackson

### Virtual Auction Closes

5 minutes after the final musical performance, the virtual auction will close

### Cookie, Cake, & Champagne Dessert Reception

From J's Catering with a Taste of Elegance  
*Sheldon Atrium Lobby*

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# READERS

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## VANESSA COOKSEY

Serving as RAC's third President & CEO, Vanessa has held marketing, communications and philanthropy leadership roles with various government, non-profit and for-profit organizations including Washington University, Wells Fargo, Anheuser-Busch, Cartoon Network, The City of Atlanta Mayor's Office, Save-A-Lot Food Stores and Mary Kay Cosmetics. A lover of the arts, Vanessa has championed funding for arts and culture in her previous roles.

Vanessa believes that her three decades of continuous community service is the foundation of her personal and professional success. She currently serves on the board of directors for several nonprofit organizations including the SIFMA Foundation for Investor Education, Harris Stowe State University, Mercy Hospitals and The Deaconess Foundation.

Vanessa earned her bachelor's degree in Radio-Television-Film from the University of Texas at Austin and a master's degree in Business Administration from Webster University. A student of governance and culture, Vanessa has studied in Europe, Asia, Central America and Africa.



## JAMES CROFT

James never stops talking, so it's lucky that his job requires a lot of it! As Leader for the Ethical Society of St. Louis, James is a public face for the community, ensuring that Ethical Humanist values are represented at rallies and protests, in schools and universities, and in the media. James believes that our culture desperately needs a Humanist moral voice, and he's determined to provide one. You can often find James yelling through a megaphone or posting on Facebook. He loves *Star Trek* way too much, and tries to find a way to work a *Star Trek* reference into every Platform Address.



## TERRY CROW

Terry was elected mayor of University City in April 2018. He is a father, businessman, and attorney who has lived in University City for over 20 years and served on the city council for a last decade prior to his election as mayor. He has previously served as President and CEO of the Edward Jones Trust Company, an entity that he created and grew for Edward Jones and became a general partner of the firm. As a general partner, Terry became responsible for the financial planning department of Edward Jones, giving lectures to financial advisors, management, and clients across the country. He also was CEO of the Guaranty Trust Company of Missouri, a privately held trust company in Clayton, Missouri that offers personal trust and investment management services to businesses and individuals. Currently, Terry is an owner of several Great Clips hair salons. He is also a partner of Crow and Takacs, LLC. A lifelong volunteer, Terry is the recipient of the prestigious Michael Edlin Award from Doorways, a nonprofit that offers supportive housing for people with HIV/AIDS. He served on the Doorways board of directors for 10 years, five of which he served as chair. Terry has also served as Chairman of the Board for the St. Louis County Children's Service Fund. In 2021, he was honored by the St. Louis Business Journal as one of the seven inaugural awardees in their "Business of Pride" Awards. Terry has completed business coursework at Harvard University, Claremont College, and the London Business School. He earned his law degree from the University of Missouri—Columbia and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Westminster College.



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# READERS (CONT.)

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## JOSEPH DAVIS

Joseph Davis, is the Superintendent of the Ferguson-Florissant School District serving 10,000 students in Ferguson, Missouri and eight nearby municipalities. He has served as bus driver, teacher, assistant principal, principal, and Superintendent in North Carolina as well as Deputy Chief of Schools in Chicago. A true equity warrior, he was drawn to Ferguson following the death of Michael Brown and has expanded opportunities and access for all students from pre-school through graduation.



## ELLIE KEMPER

Ellie Kemper is the Emmy-nominated star of the Netflix original series, *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*. She portrayed Erin Hannon on NBC's *The Office*; costarred in *Bridesmaids*; and has also appeared in *21 Jump Street*, *Identity Thief*, and *Somewhere*.

Ellie voiced Katie in *The Secret Life of Pets* and *The Secret Life of Pets 2*, Phyllis in *The Lego Batman Movie*, Smurf Blossom in *Smurfs: The Lost Village*, and is the voice of Crackle on Disney's *Sofia the First*. Her latest movie, *Home Sweet Home Alone*, is currently airing on Disney+.

Her writing has appeared in *GQ*, *Esquire*, *The New York Times*, *McSweeney's*, and *The Onion*. Her critically acclaimed book of essays *My Squirrel Days* was her debut book.

Ellie currently lives in Manhattan with her husband and her two children.



## CASEY NOLEN

Casey Nolen is an anchor and political editor at 5 On Your Side in St. Louis, Missouri. He co-anchors early evening newscasts on Fridays and evening newscasts on Saturdays. Casey's television career started behind the scenes as a photographer in Columbia, Missouri. From there, TV it took him on adventures on the Gulf Coast and in the Pacific Northwest. From Mobile, Alabama to Portland, Oregon, Casey teamed up with reporters to cover stories ranging from Hurricane Katrina to the re-eruption of Mount St. Helen's.

Casey grew up in Chaffee, Missouri and attended University of Missouri. He came to 5 On Your Side in 2007 as a multi-media journalist. That meant he often worked along, shooting and editing his own stories for live reports on 5 On Your Side at 10 p.m. He's also covered some of the world's biggest stories, including the aftermath of the 2010 Haiti earthquake, and the Olympic Games in London, Sochi, and Rio de Janeiro. In March 2020, Casey was named 5 On Your Side's political editor, which reinforces the station's commitment to covering local and regional politics in a more focused way.

Casey's work has earned him Mid-America Emmy Awards and the Illinois Associated Press named him the "Best Reporter" for the Chicago and St. Louis television markets.



## ABBY LLORICO

Abby Llorico joined 5 On Your Side as a multimedia journalist—writing, shooting, and editing—in April 2017.

Before coming home to report in St. Louis, Abby worked in Indianapolis and Washington D.C. She was most recently a reporter and anchor in Central Illinois, where she received a "Best TV Reporter" nomination from the Illinois Broadcasters Association.

Abby wakes up early weekday mornings to report for Today in St. Louis. As you head out the door, she aims to arm you with information (and hopefully, a smile) as you start your day. She especially loves telling stories that can help you learn more about your own communities here in the bi-state.

In addition to her early morning reporting, Abby hosts a podcast called *Abby Eats St. Louis* where she dishes out the stories behind the St. Louis food scene.

Abby earned a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Indiana University Bloomington.

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# READERS (CONT.)

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## KEN PAGE

Ken Page is a St. Louis native with a career spanning over 45 years. He is most widely known as the voice of “Oogie Boogie” in the Tim Burton/Disney film *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and has recreated his role in sold out concerts live to film at The Hollywood Bowl on four occasions as well as at NY/Brooklyn’s Barclay Center, Tokyo, Glasgow, London (with the London Philharmonic Orchestra) and Dublin in 2019.

Broadway/UK credits: *Guys & Dolls*, *Ain’t Misbehavin’* (Emmy winning NBC TV SPECIAL, Drama Desk Award-Best Actor, Grammy Award), *Cats* as Old Deuteronomy (OBC, London Video Cast, Grammy Award), *The Wiz*, *Ain’t Nothin’ But the Blues*, *Wizard of Oz* as Cowardly Lion; *Children of Eden* (London West End Original Cast), *My One and Only* (London Palladium), *Mr. Wonderful* (Theatre Royal Drury Lane). *The Little Mermaid* (Hollywood Bowl).

Film: *Dreamgirls*, *All Dogs Go to Heaven*, *Torch Song Trilogy*.

Ken directed the award-winning productions of *The Fantasticks* (L.A. Ovation Award Best Musical) and *Ain’t Misbehavin’* (Best Director Ovation Award nominee). In St. Louis Ken has directed *Carousel* (Union Ave. Opera), *Café Chanson*, *Sublime Intimacy*, and *Love Linda*.



## JACQUELINE THOMPSON

Jacqueline Thompson is an accomplished actor, director, and educator. As an assistant professor of theater at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, she is passionate about providing students opportunities to explore their creativity and embrace their individuality. She recently directed MTC’s production of Idris Goodwin’s *Ghost and Four Little Girls: Birmingham 1963* at COCA. She also directed MTC’s *Games Dad Didn’t Play* and performed in *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*. She returns to MTC to direct *Last Stop on Market Street* in 2022.

As an actor she has performed with the Repertory Theatre of St. Louis, The Black Rep, Shakespeare Festival St. Louis, Upstream Theater, Mustard Seed Theatre, and New Jewish Theatre. In March 2018, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* recognized Jacqueline not only as one of St. Louis’s most versatile performers, but also as one of six women shaping the arts and entertainment in St. Louis. She received a St. Louis Theater Circle Award for Outstanding Actress in a Drama as well as an artist fellowship from the Regional Arts Commission. In 2019, she received a Saint Louis Visionary Award. She was also selected by Theatre Communications Group (TCG) to participate in The Rising Leaders of Color program.



## MICHAEL THANH TRAN

Michael Tran returns to MTC after serving as the animation designer and video editor for the animated streaming production of *Jacked!* by Idris Goodwin. St. Louis audiences recently saw him in St. Louis Shakespeare Festival’s *King Lear*, featuring Andre de Shields. He has also performed in the ensembles of The Repertory Theater of St. Louis, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, and The Muny. Michael holds a BA in acting from Webster University.

#UnapologeticallyAsian

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# PERFORMERS

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## DENISE THIMES

Over the course of a multi-faceted career spanning just a little under 3 decades, Thimes is no stranger to the music world, growing up in a home surrounded by all types of music from her father & radio icon, the late Lou “Fatha” Thimes. Thimes has performed with such jazz notables as Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra (St. Louis, MO), the late Clark Terry (The Blue Note-NYC), Dr. Billy Taylor, Earl May, Benny Powell (Flushing Town Hall-NYC) and James Moody (Blue Note). She has also graced the stage with the likes of Houston Person, Jimmy&Tootie Heath, Bobby McFerrin, and Bucky Pizzarelli. In recent years she has appeared and toured Paris with David Sanborn, sung for the Queen of Thailand (Mandarin Oriental Hotel), Queen Elizabeth II (British Embassy-Washington D.C. during her 2009 visit to the U.S), President George W Bush (White House 2007), and was hand-picked by the Queen of Soul Aretha Franklin to perform for her 72nd birthday celebration (Ritz Carlton, NYC).

Most say that her acting is just as great as her singing and founding director Ron Himes of the St. Louis Black Repertory would agree. Thimes has received 8 Woodie Awards (named after Freedom Theatre Founder-Woody King-NY) for her roles as lead and supporting for acting, and musical performances. Although a native of St Louis, MO Thimes, has recently become a resident of Chicago IL, where she can be seen at Winter’s jazz club downtown Chicago.

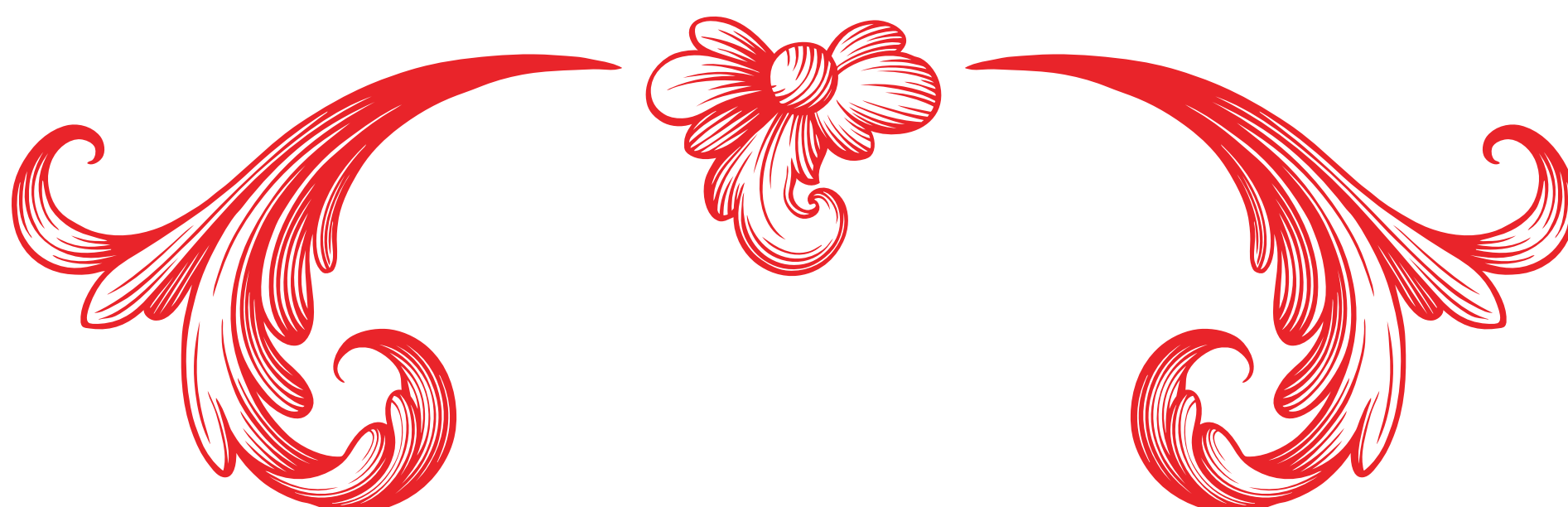
When Denise is not performing, Thimes wears another hat and is equally passionate as Founder & Executive Director of the Mildred Thimes Foundation for Pancreatic Cancer Research (named after Thimes’ mother). Thimes continues to appeal for more education and awareness for this fatal disease that struck her mother in 1997.

Whether headlining at Dizzy’s Coca Cola Room in New York, or conquering the national jazz festival scene, or sharing the stage with the legendary Tony Bennett, Denise Thimes has an unmistakable tendency to steal the show and astonish crowds of every size and background. As jazz aficionado Phoebe Jacobs stated following another famed New York show, “Denise Thimes is like Ella and Sarah born all over again.”

## CAROLING ST. LOUIS

Caroling St. Louis has been in the St. Louis area for over 30 years. We hire singers from Stages, the Muny, and the St. Louis Symphony Chorus so we have some of the best singers around! There are several music educators and church musicians in our ranks of 29 singers. We primarily go out in quartets all over the St. Louis area spreading holiday cheer!

**Tonight’s Carolers:** Jen Theby-Quinn, Jessica Lydon, Chris Clausen, and John Flack



## Thanks to Our Silent Auction Donors

Amp Up Action Park St. Louis, Ambassadors of Harmony, Bulrush STL, Circus Flora, Mary Engelbreit, Fabulous Fox St. Louis, The Hair Lab STL, Jean LaChat Photography, Jennifer Lin, Loaded: Elevated Nachos, London Tea Room, The Lumistella Company, MADE STL, The Muny, Narwhal’s Crafted, Opera Theater of Saint Louis, Pure Barre Ladue and CWE, The Repertory Theater of St. Louis, St. Louis Art Museum, St. Louis Cardinals, St. Louis Christmas Carols Association, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, Stages St. Louis, STL Style House, Taylored Tents, Traveling Tea, Urban Chestnut Brewing Company

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Big Blue Spark, Lou Bird, Tracyne Caumartin, Adrienne Davis, Kim Eberlein, Susan and James Gamble, Karen and Larry Goering, David Gonzalez, Kristin Guehlstorf, HEC-Media, Josh Knopp, Marcia Kerz, Ellen Livingston, Margaret O’Brien, Sarah Richmond, Opera Theater of Saint Louis Costume Shop, The Sheldon Concert Hall & Galleries, The Vault Luxury Resale, Coleen Williams, Michael Williams



## MISSION STATEMENT

Inspired by the intelligence and emotional wisdom of young people, we create professional theater, foster inclusive community, and nurture meaningful learning through the arts.

## STAFF

**Julia Flood** Artistic Director

**Joe Gfaller** Managing Director

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Education Director

**John Wolbers**  
Producing Associate

**Sarah Thompson**  
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## FOUNDERS

Metro Theater Company is a professional theater for young people and families and a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization. It is a proud member of the Theatre Communications Group (the national service organization for non-profit professional theaters), Theatre for Young Audiences/USA (the U.S. chapter of the international association of theaters for young people), and Missouri Citizens for the Arts, as well as a proud Cultural Partner of the School District of Clayton. Metro Theater Company receives financial assistance from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Missouri Arts Council, a state agency; Missouri Humanities Council, a state agency; the Regional Arts Commission; the Arts and Education Council; and numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals.



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We are grateful for the generous support of so many in our community. Without you, Metro Theater Company's work would not be possible. We include a list of all supporters who have made contributions or pledges between January 1, 2020 and October 11, 2021. We regret any inadvertent omissions from this list. If you made a pledge or a gift and do not see your name listed here, please contact Managing Director Joe Gfaller at [joe@metroplays.org](mailto:joe@metroplays.org).

## THE CAROL NORTH & NICHOLAS KRYAH SOCIETY

The Carol North and Nicholas Kryah Benefactor Society was established to honor four decades of leadership by Artistic Director Carol North and Resident Artist Nicholas Kryah.

Members of the Benefactor Society contribute a minimum of \$1000 annually to ensure that Carol and Nicholas' legacy of meaningful artistic work for young audiences continues to grow.

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