

**CYGNET  
THEATRE**

2014/15  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
Cygnet Theatre Company





Believing in the power of theatre to startle the soul, ignite debate and embrace the diversity of the community in which it serves, Cygnet Theatre Company is fearlessly committed to the dissection, examination and celebration of the human story through the medium of live theatre.



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THEATRE**

Dear Friends,

It's a little crazy how these years all seem to meld into one. Twelve years can go by fast, but we sure have enjoyed taking this journey with you.

Season Twelve proved to be a banner year at Cygnet. We opened with a remount of an old favorite, *Pageant*, highlighting David McBean reprising his celebrated role as Miss Deep South. Audiences are growing to love our Repertory tradition and producing two Sam Shepard plays in the Fall was especially artistically rewarding. Story-telling, puppets and a festive original score enhanced our newest holiday tradition, *A Christmas Carol*. We are especially proud to have brought Stephen Karam's *Sons of the Prophet* to the stage. This Pulitzer finalist was directed by an inspiring new talent, Rob Lutfy, who will join us in Season Thirteen as Cygnet's Associate Artistic Director. Our original production of *My Fair Lady* has long been an audience favorite so we brought it back in the Spring, featuring some of the original cast. We closed the season with *The Whale* by MacArthur Foundation Genius award-winner Samuel Hunter. This touching story about a 600-pound man was impossible to read or to see without tears in your eyes.

Cygnet reached new milestones in both earned and contributed income, and the Theatre Forward Fund campaign, launched to help place Cygnet on a strong financial foundation for the future, exceeded its goal by over \$150,000.

Our new Marketing Director has enabled us to focus our marketing efforts, expand awareness programs and increase overall operating capacity. Our new Operations Manager (formerly the Marketing Director) is now able to focus his energy on IT, front of house management, graphic design and facility maintenance.

Cygnet also became a Blue Star Theatre this season, offering \$20 seats for Active Duty Military, Veterans and their families. We expanded our education programs, providing free in-school theatre workshops and hosting students at the Old Town Theatre for free student matinees, while continuing Storytelling-on-the-Green in the Park.

This was all made possible by the dedication of our staff, the creativity of our artists and the continuing generosity of our donors.

## Season Sponsors

Anonymous, Bill and Judy Garrett, Leonard Hirsch,  
Kamaya Jane and Diane Zeps in Honor of their Mother, Elaine Lipinsky

*Bill Schmidt*  
Bill Schmidt, Executive Director

*Sean Murray*  
Sean Murray, Artistic Director





**"Not to be missed"** - *La Jolla Light*



**"Outstanding"** - *SDGLN.com*



**"Powerful Performances"**  
- *La Jolla Light*



**"Amazing"**- *SD Uptown News*



**"Superb"** - *Times of San Diego*



**"Riveting"**- *Examiner.com*



**"First-rate Production"**  
- *SD Union Tribune*

## PAGEANT HILARIOUS MUSICAL

Cygnets kicked off the season with the remounting of one of its funniest musicals ever, and a fan favorite. An all male cast faced off in swimsuit, talent and evening gown competitions to claim the Miss Glamouresse tiara. Audiences got in on the fun by selecting a different winner every night.

## SHEP REP PERFORMING IN REPERTORY

This season at Cygnets we continued our tradition of performing two shows in rotating rep with two plays by Sam Shepard. The opportunity to see two of Shepard's greatest plays, True West and Fool for Love, allowed audiences to examine side-by-side the themes that connect all of his work.

## TRUE WEST BLISTERING CONTEMPORARY COMEDY

Dueling brothers, Austin and Lee, set off a sibling war to rival Cain and Able as they both struggle for identity in this 1983 Pulitzer Prize Finalist. The show received Critic's Pick by the San Diego Reader.

## FOOL FOR LOVE SEXY INTENSE DRAMA

In an old motel room in the Mojave Desert, May and Eddie are two people who can't live without each other, whether they like it or not. Reality, dreams, truth and lies all mingled in this explosive performance. The show received Critic's Choice by the San Diego Union Tribune.

## A CHRISTMAS CAROL A HOLIDAY TRADITION

This Dickens' classic, completely reimaged by Sean Murray, boasted an original score by Billy Thompson, amazing puppetry and live sound effects. A new partnership with the Salvation Army brought families together for crafts, pictures with Santa and a toy drive for our first ever "Family Day." The show received Critic's Choice by the San Diego Union Tribune.

## SONS OF THE PROPHET TRAGEDY & COMEDY

This San Diego Premiere followed Joseph Charles Douaihy as he dealt with unexplained chronic pain and the fate of his reeling family heavy on his shoulders. This finalist for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize took audiences on a brutally funny journey about family, culture, and how we cope with wounds that just won't heal. The show received Critic's Pick by the San Diego Reader.

## MY FAIR LADY BELOVED CLASSIC MUSICAL

This reprise of the Lerner and Lowe classic musical introduced Allison Spratt Pearce to delighted Cygnets audiences and once again featured Artistic Director Sean Murray as the inimitable Henry Higgins. Audiences were expanded by new partnerships with the Girl Scouts during our first Girl Scout Day, and several new business partners at our first "Girls Night Out."

## THE WHALE SMART SUBMERSIVE DRAMA

Audiences were surprised by this big-hearted and fiercely funny drama about Charlie, a 600-pound recluse trying desperately to reconnect to his long-estranged teenage daughter. A post show "Evening with the Experts" provided information about obesity, end of life care and Mormonism. We presented our first pre-show concert with an up-and-coming local San Diego musical duo.





## ENGAGE THE STAGE

### Free In-School Workshops

Cygnnet brings in-school workshops to San Diego County middle and high school students, exposing them to theatre topics like acting, playwriting, literature and history. The curriculum meets multiple San Diego Unified Visual and Performing Arts and California Common Core standards. In 2014-15, Cygnnet's 36 workshops, serving 1,037 students, focused on the productions of TRUE WEST, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, SONS OF THE PROPHET and MY FAIR LADY.

*Never thanked you for sending us Tim West! He was amazing! The youth loved his presence and energy and learned so much from his time with us.*

— High School Teacher

### Free Student Matinees

Cygnnet offers free student matinees for select mainstage productions, and in 2014-2015, 894 students attended matinees of TRUE WEST, A CHRISTMAS CAROL, SONS OF THE PROPHET and MY FAIR LADY. Cygnnet creates study guides for students and teachers to complement the matinee experience. Post-show forums with actors and Cygnnet's dramaturge help further the students' understanding of each production. For the majority of these students, this was their first live theatre performance.

*I really enjoyed the wonderful cast. The energy they fed the crowd just wanted me to interact even more. Hearing about what goes into a professional play makes me truly appreciate the hard work and dedication.*

— High School Student

## STORYTELLING ON THE GREEN

Six times each week, Cygnnet moves outside into Old Town San Diego State Historic Park for "Storytelling-on-the-Green," a free theatrical education program rooted in California history and literature. The actors perform in the Delsarte style, as did the Tanner Troupe, who performed in Old Town in the 19th century. The shows are targeted toward a younger audience, featuring abridged versions of classics like HAMLET, MACBETH, ROMEO & JULIET, and DON QUIXOTE performed in repertory.

For many of the 8,000 participants in 2014-15, "Storytelling" was their first exposure to live theatre.



## EMERGING ARTISTS

Cygnnet Theatre collaborates with San Diego State University to provide Lipinsky Family Fellowships for specially selected San Diego State University graduate students. In Season XII, six Fellows designed sets, sound, lights or costumes for Cygnnet under the mentorship of Artistic Director Sean Murray. Cygnnet also provides professional directing and acting opportunities for select recent theatre school graduates, often offering them their first Actor's Equity contract, helping launch their professional career. In 2014-2015, Cygnnet provided four opportunities to these emerging artists. Since this program began, several artists have appeared on and off Broadway and others have returned to Cygnnet, including Cygnnet's incoming Associate Artistic Director, Rob Lutfy.

## PLAYWRIGHTS IN PROCESS

Cygnnet's third Playwrights in Process Festival, in the Fall of 2014, was produced in partnership with Playwrights Project. It featured three playwriting workshops, staged readings of four new plays and post-show forums with the playwrights, casts and audiences.

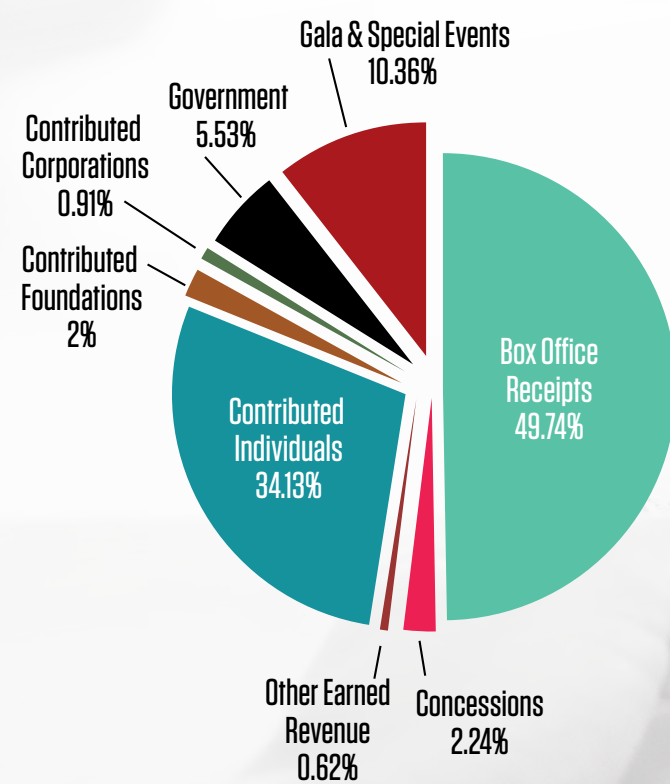






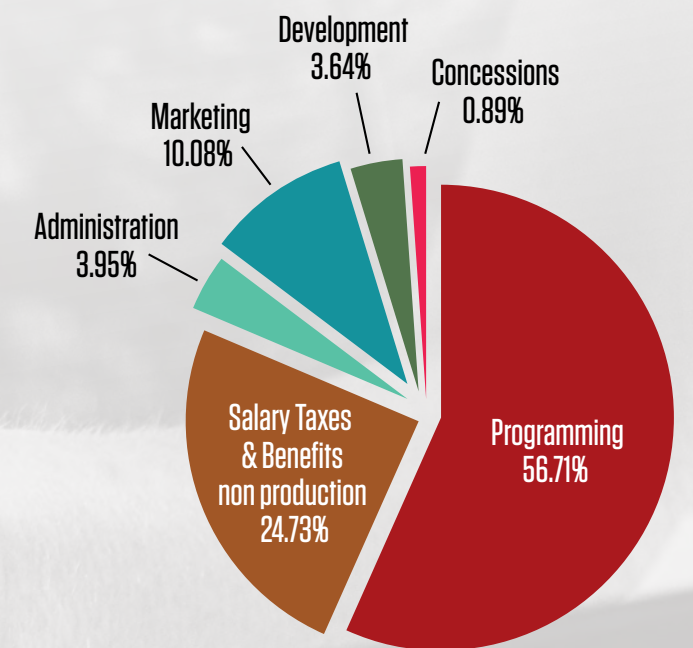
## REVENUE

Box Office Receipts	\$1,156,604
Concessions	\$52,114
Other Earned Revenue	\$14,480
Contributed - Individuals	\$793,618
Contributed - Foundations	\$46,525
Contributed - Corporations	\$21,123
Government	\$128,610
Gala and Special Events	\$240,818
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,325,282</b>



## EXPENSE

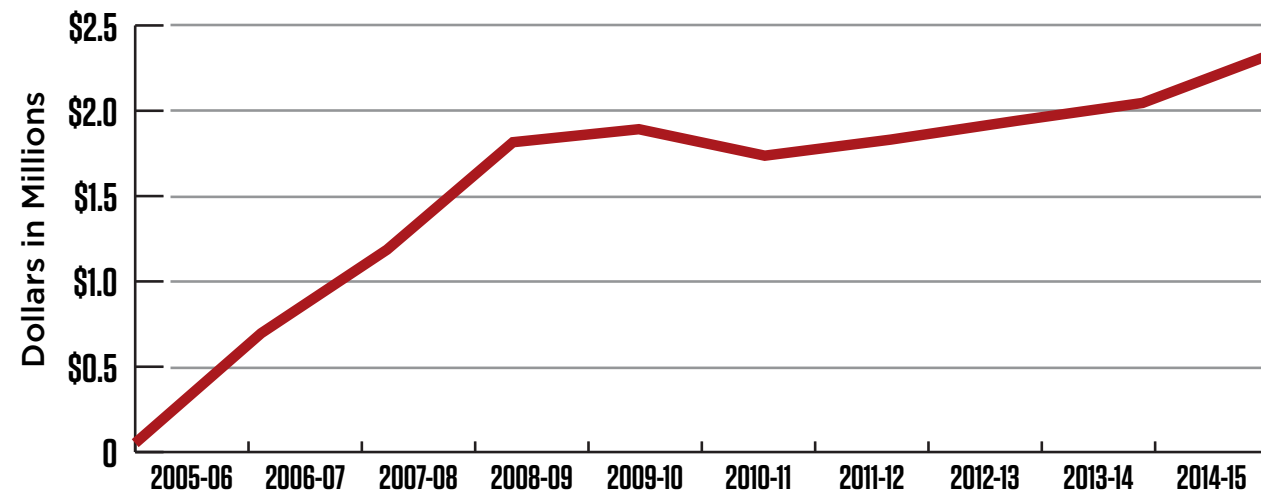
Programming	\$1,330,615
Salary Taxes & Benefits - non production	\$580,326
Administration	\$92,763
Marketing	\$236,549
Development	\$85,396
Concessions	\$20,862
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,346,511</b>





## 10-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH

Cygnnet has experienced notable growth over the past 10 years. The largest increase came in the 3 years prior to our move from Rolando and during our first year producing at Old Town Theatre. Once established in Old Town and during the early years of the great recession, growth was more modest. Revenue increases were seen each year except one, during the 2010-2011 season. In Season XII we had our strongest earnings to date and a 13.61% increase over the prior year.



## THEATRE FORWARD FUND

The Theatre Forward Fund's primary goal was to provide Cygnnet with a cash infusion of a half-million dollars in combined gifts and loans by the end of 2015. The success of this initiative has allowed us to take two steps that are critical to a fiscally sound, robust, mid-sized theatre: 1) create a fully funded deferred revenue account for 2015-16 subscriptions, and 2) continue building a cash reserve fund to support operations. We are pleased to report that the Theatre Forward Fund not only met but exceeded its initial goal.

## Many Thanks to Cygnnet Annual Fund Donors

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# Cygnets Theatre Company Season XII

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