



2022/23  
ANNUAL REPORT  
Cygnet Theatre Company





# Mission Statement

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.



Dear friends,

As we reflected on the journey of fiscal year 2022-2023, nearly a year after our joyous reopening from the challenges of the pandemic, we found ourselves deeply grateful for the unwavering loyalty and enthusiasm of our supporters. Positioned for continued growth, we welcomed patrons back with open arms, eager to share the transformative power of theatre once again.

Summer kicked off with the remount of one of our best-selling hit musicals, the edgy and award-winning *Cabaret*. Next up was our ever-popular holiday hit musical, *A Christmas Carol*, with Artistic Director Sean Murray returning to the role of Ebenezer. Kicking off 2023 was the mystical drama *El Huracán*, which captivated patrons with its magic and music. In the spring we brought some laughter and levity to the stage with the classic comedy *Present Laughter*. The fiscal year ended with the wonderfully weird absurd comedy *Sharon*. This world premiere was part of the Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission and was praised by critics and audiences alike.

From heartfelt to hilarious, from the mystical to the absurd, our lineup exemplified the rich tapestry of storytelling that defines Cygnet Theatre. The trajectory of growth, in the wake of the pandemic, is a testament to the dedication and passion of our exceptional staff, board, artists, and volunteers, as well as the quality of work found on stage.

We extend our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you who has supported us on this remarkable journey.

# Season Sponsors

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Amalia Alácon Morris in *El Huracán* (2023)

Cover: Megan Carmitchel in *Cabaret* (2022)

Bill Schmidt, Executive Director

Sean Murray, Artistic Director





**HIT MUSICAL**  
**CABARET**

We were thrilled to remount one of our best-selling hit musicals! This dark, daring, and provocative musical featured the return of Karson St. John as the Emcee, accompanied by a stand-out cast. Megan Carmitchel won the San Diego Critics Circle Actor of the Year for 2022, which included her work as Sally Bowles.

*"Cygnet presents a superior Cabaret" – San Diego Union-Tribune*



**FAVORITE HOLIDAY MUSICAL**  
**A CHRISTMAS CAROL**

Everyone loves Ebenezer! This year was our seventh season with this holiday classic musical, and audiences keep coming back to enjoy this story of hope and redemption. Our long-running Scrooge hung up his nightcap in 2022, and our own Artistic Director, Sean Murray, stepped into the role.

*"A well-oiled crowd pleaser" – San Diego Union-Tribune*



**MYSTICAL DRAMA**  
**EL HURACÁN**

This powerful tale of family and forgiveness received its second-ever production at Cygnet Theatre after the World Premiere at Yale Rep in 2018. We were thrilled to have playwright Charise Castro Smith (Encanto) and director Daniel Jáquez provide our audiences with a first-hand look into the process through interviews and press coverage.

*"The best local production of the year so far." -Stage West*

**CLASSIC COMEDY**  
**PRESENT LAUGHTER**

This lighthearted farce won the hearts of our patrons every night. Artistic Director Sean Murry charmed audiences with his portrayal of aging theatrical star Garry Essendine, rounded out by a strong cast of comedic actors.

*"You may enjoy it so much that you'll want to see it more than once!" – San Diego Story*



**ABSURD COMEDY**  
**SHARON**

This World Premiere by up-and-coming playwright Keiko Green received its first reading in 2021 through the Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission. Both hilarious and Hitchcockian, it had audiences questioning...well, everything. Sharon received 4 San Diego Craig Noel Award nominations, including Outstanding Dramatic Production.

*"Wonderfully weird" – San Diego Union-Tribune*







A Christmas Carol Student Matinee, 2018



From the Page to the Stage, 2023



Cabaret Student Matinee, 2022  
Students with artist Linda Libby



The Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission, 2022

## CYGNET THEATRE ARTS EDUCATION AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS

All Arts Engagement and Outreach programs are created to broaden the base of people who engage with theatre in our community, deepen the level of engagement, promote equity, diversity and inclusion, and to inspire greater empathy. **All community engagement programs are offered free of charge.**

Financial Support for Cygnet's Season 19 Arts Engagement and Education programs was provided by the California Arts Council, City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, County of San Diego, The Dr. Seuss Fund, and The Shubert Foundation.

**The Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission** provided 3 UCSD Graduate students the opportunity to workshop and stage a play they've been working on and not had time to finish. All three playwrights were awarded a financial grant to complete their scripts.

The inaugural **Dee Silver M.D. Commission**, awarded a financial grant and an unrestricted time limit on the creation of a new play that responded to our present times with hope and healing. The process included workshops with The New Harmony Project, Playwright's Center and Cygnet Theatre.

Cygnet has made it a priority to give professional opportunities to emerging artists and designers.

**The Jeffrey and Sheila Lipinsky SDSU Fellowship** program provided 4 Professional Design Opportunities for SDSU graduate students. Fellows work with professional designers to design sets, sound, lights and costumes.

**171 Military family members** were able to attend A Christmas Carol free of charge thanks to donations provided by our patrons through our Tickets for Troops program. Cygnet also continues to offer **deeply discounted tickets to military personnel, veterans, and their families**, year-round through the Blue Star Theatre program.

**Over 1,000 students** experienced a Page To Stage Summer Reading Program at one of **20 San Diego Public Libraries** around San Diego County. Page to Stage is 45 minute theatrical presentation that inspires a love for reading in children through the joy of live theatre.

**177 students** from Stanley Middle School, Preuss Charter School, Coronado School of the Arts and Chula Vista Middle School attended in-school workshops and a student matinee performance of A Christmas Carol.

**237 students** from Helix Charter School, Bayfront High Charter School. Chula Vista High and Hoover High Cardinal Interact attended in-school workshops and a student matinee performance of El Huracán.

**216 students** from Bayfront High Charter School and Chula Vista High attended in-school workshops and a student matinee performance of Cabaret.

A puppetry workshop was held for military youth ages 6-12 in partnership with **Armed Services YMCA**.

**A Sensory Friendly Performance** was held for A Christmas Carol. These performances are designed to create a welcoming and comfortable arts experience for people with autism, sensory sensitivities, or other social, learning or cognitive disabilities.

To help audiences further comprehend and appreciate Cygnet productions, Cygnet hosted **Behind the Curtain** showcases with the directors and designers to discuss the production and where they are in the rehearsal process.

**“From the Page to the Stage was a true joy to witness. It is a wonderful showcase of how the theatre can bring the magic of literature alive with acting, song, and dance. It was a privilege to work with Cygnet Theatre to bring this production to our library patrons, and an honor to facilitate some of our patrons' very first experiences with live theatre.”**

**Carrie M. Kreutz-Landry**  
Youth Services Librarian,  
Serra Mesa-Kearny Mesa Branch,  
San Diego Public Library



Summer Youth Camp, 2022



From the Page to the Stage, 2023



The Bill and Judy Garrett Finish Line Commission, 2022





Artist Christopher Cruz and Artist Advocate Barbara Bolt at Opening Night of *El Huracán*



Producers Circle Donors Barbara Zell and Bill McHarg with Artist Berto Fernandez at 20th Anniversary Party



Artist Patrick Marion with Producers Circle Donor Wendy Nash at 20th Anniversary Party



Producers Circle Donors Dr. and Mrs. Edgar Canada at Tango at Twilight Gala



Artist/Donor Eileen Bowman, Donor Marc Sylwestrzak, Artist / Artist Advocate Anise and Artist Advocate David Ritchie at Opening Night of *A Christmas Carol*



Producers Circle Donors Richard and Eileen Brown with Artists MJ Seiber and Keiko Green at Opening Night of the World Premiere of *Sharon*

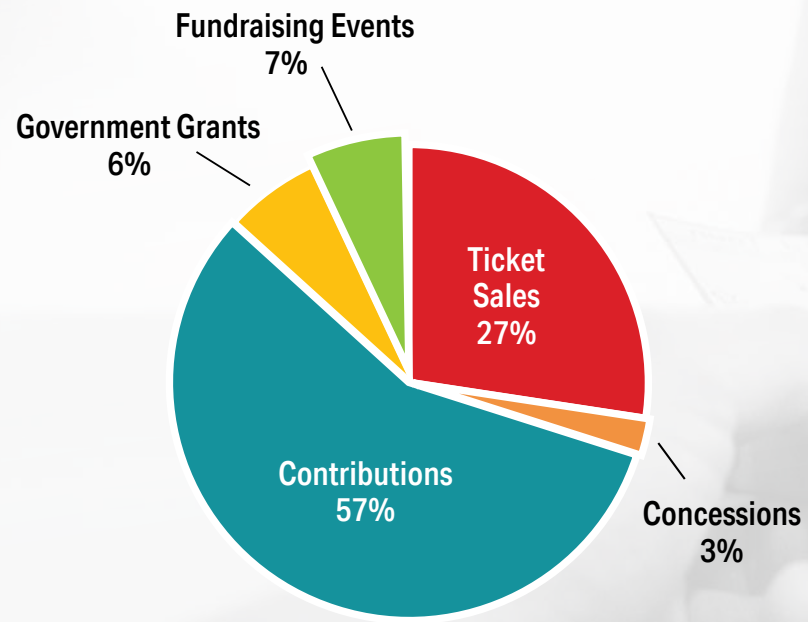


Producers Circle Donors Wayne, Molli and Mary Wagner at Tango at Twilight Gala

## REVENUE

As a nonprofit company presenting high-quality, daring and diverse programming, Cygnet relies on donations from individuals as well as private and public sources to accomplish our mission. Because ticket sales cover only a portion of the actual cost of producing a show, the generosity of our patrons is essential to maintaining artistic integrity while keeping ticket prices affordable.

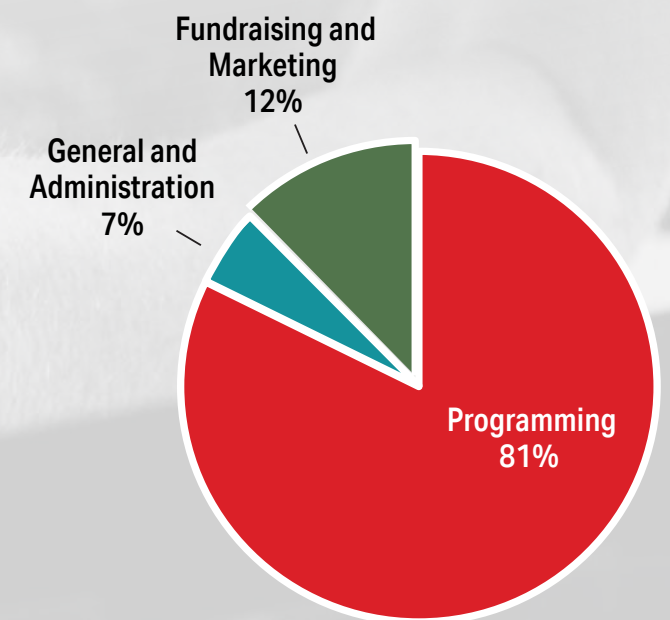
TICKET SALES	\$1,003,586
CONCESSIONS AND OTHER	\$91,804
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$2,079,453
GOVERNMENT GRANTS	\$229,861
FUNDRAISING EVENTS	\$224,606
DONATED SERVICES	\$ -
REALIZED INVESTMENT INCOME	\$10,108
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,659,419</b>



## EXPENSE

Our commitment to taking artistic risks, producing top-quality productions and hiring the best actors/designers for each role has made us one of the leading professional theatres in San Diego. We are especially proud of our reputation for employing equity actors and paying our artists at some of the highest rates in the San Diego area.

PROGRAMMING	\$2,581,653
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATION	\$234,895
FUNDRAISING	\$390,690
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,207,236</b>





## WHY INVEST NOW?

Cygnnet Theatre is one of San Diego's leading professional theatre companies. We are known for the quality of our productions and the excellence of our artists. Cygnnet has received over 130 awards and accolades for theatre excellence.

We are known for producing adventurous, entertaining and thought-provoking work. We create high-quality art within a modest budget, which provides challenging opportunities for artists and designers.

Cygnnet is a welcoming place that treats its artists and patrons like family. We provide open, equal access to our artists, we present theatre that reflects our community, and we provide a supportive and nurturing home for local artists.



Artistic Director Sean Murray and Executive Director Bill Schmidt at Cygnnet's 2023 Tango at Twilight Gala.

## CYGNET LEGACY SOCIETY

Cygnnet is honored to recognize our 2022-2023 Legacy Society members for their commitment to provide valuable resources to help ensure the future vitality and long-term stability of Cygnnet Theatre.

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\*In Memoriam

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*Photos by Karli Cadel, Michael Pearce*



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