

# IN TANDEM THEATRE, INC.

## ANNUAL REPORT 2013-2014 SEASON

### HISTORY

In Tandem Theatre, Inc. was formed in 1998 by co-founders, Chris and Jane Flieller. Chris received his BFA from Texas Christian University and holds an MFA from the Professional Theatre Training Program at UWM, now located in Delaware. Jane earned her BFA from Wayne State University in Detroit. Chris's acting and technical background combined with Jane's experience in stage management, marketing and business, provided a strong foundation on which to establish the company. In Tandem Theatre has operated with fiscal responsibility and strong community support in the years since its inception. In Tandem is committed to providing audiences with an eclectic mix of material from musicals and comedies to drama and new works. The company is proud to utilize the talents of local actors, directors, and designers, and In Tandem has produced works by local writers nineteen times in sixteen years of operation. In Tandem produces exciting, innovative theatre designed to reach a broad population of current and new patrons.

### MISSION

In Tandem is committed to producing exciting, innovative theatre by presenting creative and eclectic stories designed to enlighten, inspire, provoke and entertain a diverse audience.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- In Tandem has concluded fifteen out of sixteen seasons with a cash surplus, with most seasons maintaining a 65% -35% earned to unearned ratio. The 2013-14 season saw closer to a 50% -50% earned to unearned ratio.
- In Tandem acquired a permanent space in July 2007. The cost of renovations exceeded savings and a \$50,000 loan was procured. The build out was completed with the exception of one project and a five-year payback plan was put in place to retire the debt. Through careful budgeting and two successful seasons, the loan was retired two and a half years early. A very successful fundraiser (a three-performance concert version of *Jesus Christ Superstar*) was held in March 2010 to raise the money necessary to complete the last project: new energy efficient work lights and a new ceiling in the theatre with sound dampening insulation (the church sanctuary is located directly above the stage), thus maximizing usage of the building. This work was completed in July 2010. In Tandem began its 2010-11 season complete in its build out and debt-free.
- In the 2009-2010 season, with support from the Mary L. Nohl Fund, In Tandem's 10th Street Gallery initiated a visual arts education program. The program allows high school students with little or no access to visual arts education the opportunity to work one-on-one with artists who are exhibiting their work in the theater's gallery. These artists present their artwork, teach workshops and help students create their own artwork within that artist's discipline. The program was expanded in 2011-2012 to include an Artist-In-Residence program. Four local artists were given studio space within the theater's building at no cost. These artists present solo exhibits, a group exhibit, teach high school workshops and assist the students in presenting their own exhibit at the end of the school year.

## GOALS

Within the next year, In Tandem plans to:

- Continue increasing awareness of In Tandem Theatre through marketing, press coverage, word of mouth and through the efforts of our Board of Directors.
- Produce four full-length productions of the highest quality, hiring seasoned performers and highly qualified staff, while increasing single and season ticket sales.
- Continue to increase unearned revenue to more closely balance the earned to unearned revenue ratio. This will be accomplished through continued efforts at underwriting, sponsorships and grant writing. Earned revenue will be sought through ticket sales, advertising sources, contracted services, the sale of merchandise and concessions, and rentals.
- Continue cultivating new board members, placing a strong emphasis on fundraising, current and future financial sustainability, organization awareness and diversity.
- To continue producing plays and musicals that reflect a myriad of stories that enlighten, inspire, provoke and entertain a diverse audience. The plays selected for the 2014-2015 season are an example of In Tandem's desire to create work that inspires thought and discussion while maintaining its eclectic programming, while also valuing escapism and enlightenment through live entertainment.

## 2013 – 2014 SEASON REPORT

**BURYING THE BONES** by M.E.H. Lewis  
**October 4-27, 2013**  
**Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

*Burying The Bones* was a unique play that captured elements of mystery, a love story and a ghost story. It combined historic events and wrapped them into an intriguing and very personal tale. These elements, along with the political aspects of the story, were embraced by audiences. Talk backs were lively and engaging.

“Do yourself a favor and go see *Burying The Bones* at In Tandem Theatre! Wow! I promise you won't be disappointed and you may even learn something, too. Hurry and see it before it's over!”

-- Kristen P., In Tandem Theatre Patron

"Incredible show...Heavy stuff, but excellently well done; says many things about what we THINK we know."

--Judith H., In Tandem Theatre Patron

*Burying The Bones was supported, in part, by a grant from the Milwaukee Arts Board.*

**A CUDAHY CAROLER CHRISTMAS by Anthony Wood**  
**November 29, 2013 – January 5, 2014**  
**Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

In its eighth incarnation over eleven years' time, In Tandem brought back the wildly popular alternative holiday show, *A Cudahy Caroler Christmas*. The play was written by local playwright, Anthony Wood, and cleverly portrays the whimsical nature of Milwaukee's own suburb of Cudahy. Originally produced in a storefront theatre prior to In Tandem's move to its permanent venue, the show played to sold out houses over three consecutive years. Following a year hiatus, *A Cudahy Caroler Christmas* moved to Vogel Hall in a co-presentation with the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. Playing at the 475-seat venue was a success for three years. In Tandem then put the show away for three more years, bringing it back with a partially new cast at its venue on Tenth Street. Having been written for a smaller venue, the show proved a hit once again as patrons returned and hundreds of new theatre-goers made their acquaintance with this delightful musical comedy. After selling thousands of original cast recordings, a second recording of the show recorded live at Vogel Hall, continues to sell well.

The play centers around Stasch Zelinski who is on a quest to reunite the Cudahy Carolers following a bitter break up five years earlier. Throughout the first act, he introduces the audience to the various characters through songs and scenes as he gets each one to agree to sing "one last concert" in an effort to bring the joy of the season back to Cudahy through the beauty of their music. The second act is the concert itself, where anything that can go wrong, does go wrong. Of course, our hero prevails in the end and all wrongs are amended. This hilarious homage to beer, bowling, friendship and forgiveness has spawned two cast recordings, public appearances and tremendous critical acclaim.

"Sensitive audiences looking for old-fashioned Yuletide fare should probably look elsewhere. Theatergoers who enjoy no-holds barred humor will have the time of their lives."

-- Third Coast Digest

"What [the Carolers] learn – in a show that repeatedly champions the value of the community – is that we make much better music when we sing together."

-- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

**CHESAPEAKE by Lee Blessing**  
**February 21 - March 16, 2014**  
**Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

Local actor Matt Daniels, in a "virtuoso performance", played Kerr in this off-beat political fantasy. Audiences were treated to a tour-de-force performance that examined the importance of free speech and artistic freedom. Kerr, a performance artist in the 1990's, draws the ire of the Senator from his hometown who decides to use Kerr as a political pawn in a fight against federal funding of the arts. Daniels plays all the roles in the show: Artist, Senator, Wife, Assistant ... Senator's dog. Through a

series of circumstances, Kerr dies and comes back as the Senator's beloved Chesapeake Bay Retriever and only in that role is he able to get the Senator's ear. These discussions lead them both to be better listeners, believers and show us a smarter future.

"It's a story about art. It's a story about communication. It's a story about the comedy of deep, interpersonal connection. But above all, it is a story. In Tandem's production of the one-actor comedy *Chesapeake* is well worth seeing because it tells a good story."

-- Shepherd Express

"*Chesapeake* reminds us that if we actually want to move ahead, we must walk there together - even if it takes a dog to first save us from ourselves and point the way forward."

-- Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

**1959 PINK THUNDERBIRD by James McLure**  
**April 25 - May 18, 2014**  
**Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10<sup>th</sup> Street**

Audiences were delighted with this slice-of-life, bittersweet comedy. Two one-acts comprise this play, respectively titled *Laundry & Bourbon* and *Lone Star*. In the first half, the women of a small Texas town in the late 1970's reminisce about the "good old days" over gossip and bourbon on a hot summer afternoon. In the second act we meet their men-folk and begin to understand the complexities of the situations hinted at in the first half. Although there are many comedic moments, these are essentially serious dramas addressing the idea of lost youth and the heartbreaking need to let go of the past.

"A performance that leaves lingering thoughts of what has been and what can still become happiness in the future. Especially when treasured possessions and people, even a precious T-Bird, might be lost forever."

-- BroadwayWorld.com

"...a vision of American dreaming that's ever colored with disappointment but still leavened by a good laugh with lifelong companions."

-- Milwaukee Magazine (online)

Funding for the 2013-2014 season was provided in part by the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts, the United Performing Arts Fund, CAMPAC (County Funding) and individual contributions.

## COLLABORATIONS AND EVENTS

- A new audio system was procured, courtesy of Johnson Controls Foundation, which provides outstanding quality in music to be played in the lobby in the absence of live pianists and to create ambiance for outside rentals of the space. Speakers were also installed inside the theatre for enhanced sound capabilities for productions.
- Making affordable space available to emerging artists is a priority for In Tandem. Reasonable and discounted rental rates have been made available to such organizations as Insurgent Theatre's Play In a Day, Pink Banana Theatre Company, Bite Theatre, World's Stage, Uprooted Theatre Company, the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center and UW-Whitewater.
- In 2007, a group of local high school students formed their own company, The World's Stage, and regularly rented the theatre at reduced rates in exchange for assistance on In Tandem projects such as building improvements, set construction, and tear-downs. The students have since moved on to college with many of them remaining local and continuing to produce theatre in the same arrangement.
- A grant from the Nonprofit Management Fund brought in a Development Consultant to assist in achieving the goal of increasing unearned revenue, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding and creation of a development plan. This past year, a second grant from the Nonprofit Management Fund allowed In Tandem to follow the course of action set down by the consultant to overhaul the database system.
- In Tandem Theatre continued its work with the UW-Milwaukee Helen Bader School of Social Welfare by providing actors for role-playing activities resulting in hands-on experience for students preparing for careers in social work. An administrative stipend and payment for the actors is received. An article praising the collaboration has appeared in a nationally recognized social service industry magazine.
- *Burying the Bones* by MEH Lewis and *Chesapeake* by Lee Blessing were both named Best of the Year - 2013 by onmilwaukee.com

## FUNDRAISING

In addition to generous funding from the aforementioned for direct support of programming, In Tandem Theatre received assistance from the following:

- Support toward the 2013-2014 season came from the United Performing Arts Fund, the Milwaukee Arts Board, the Nonprofit Management Fund, Johnson Controls Foundation, Mary L. Nohl Foundation, GMAR Youth Foundation, the Runzheimer Foundation, and through individual contributions for special projects and general operating support.
- In Tandem received general funding support from government agencies including CAMPAC (County funding) and the Wisconsin Arts Board.

- In-kind donations of merchandise from A&J Promotions including t-shirts, hats and mugs brought in additional revenue throughout the year. Other in-kind support comes from the law offices of Whyte Hirschboeck Dudek, S.C. for copy services, Brad McKendry for shop space and warehouse storage, Mark Frohna Photography for season photography, Barb LaBarbera for graphic art work, and Betsy Mancosky for annual brochure layout, and Anthony Wood for videography. Select Sound, Acme Production Services and Anti-Shadows Lighting all donated goods and services for the fundraising concert, *JC Superstar*.
- The annual campaign exceeded its goal by 82%, prompting a higher goal in 2014-2015.
- The holiday show exceeded its financial goal by nearly \$10,000.
- As an Affiliate Member of the United Performing Arts Fund, In Tandem Theatre actively participated in the Workplace Giving portion of the annual campaign, raising unrestricted funds to help offset operational expenses. Participation in the annual Ride for the Arts also raised money for In Tandem Theatre. In Tandem exceeded its goal in fundraising through the Ride by 12% over the previous year.
- In Tandem hosted two fundraising events in 2013-2014. Two performances of the dark comedy, *The Eight: Reindeer Monologues* by Jeff Goode raised nearly \$8,000. A three-performance, concert-version of *JC Superstar* raised over \$16,000. Both hugely successful events were made possible through the donation of time and talent by local actors and designers.

## AWARENESS

In Tandem Theatre will launch its 17<sup>th</sup> season in fall 2014. In Tandem Theatre's inclusion in the professional arts community has been evidenced in many ways:

- A member in good standing with
  - Theatre Wisconsin: The Alliance of Professional Theatres in Wisconsin.
  - Visit Milwaukee (formerly the Greater Milwaukee Conventions and Visitors Bureau).
  - Creative Alliance of Milwaukee.
- An active Affiliate Member of the United Performing Arts Fund.
- In Tandem is driven to bringing new patrons into the theatre and providing the opportunity to make professional theatre affordable and accessible to all. In addition to offering the lowest ticket price in the area for professional theatre, ongoing efforts include pay-what-you-can nights, student rush seats, senior discounts and substantial savings on season subscriptions. Volunteer opportunities are available at every performance for those who hand out programs or take tickets and then see the show at no charge.
- In Tandem Theatre is fortunate to have a substantial and growing number of volunteers who assist on a myriad of projects including events, front-of-house activities, set building and deconstruction, marketing and building maintenance. These volunteers allow us to keep our administrative costs low, a savings that can then be passed along to patrons.
- In Tandem works closely with several universities (UW-Milwaukee, UW-Whitewater, UW-Stevens Point and UW-Oshkosh, to date) by providing practicum and internship opportunities in production and administration. Individuals seeking an education in the arts work in the areas of production and administration with an emphasis on hands-on learning by working with a smaller organization.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF**

In Tandem Theatre employs Chris Flieller as Artistic Director and Jane Flieller as Managing Director in full-time positions. Cindy Thomas is the part-time Administrative Associate and Colin Gawronski is the part-time Production Manager (effective July 1, 2014). Stephanie Wiedenhoef is the freelance curator for the theatre's visual arts gallery. The Board of Directors does not receive compensation as determined through In Tandem Theatre's by-laws. In Tandem hires local actors, directors, stage managers, and technical support on a show-to-show basis each season, employing an average of 40 to 50 persons a year. Regularly, In Tandem works with interns from local universities in both production and administration.

### **SUMMARY**

In Tandem Theatre is thrilled to be part of Milwaukee's vibrant theatre community. We greatly appreciate and thank all those who help keep our organization fiscally solvent: our Board of Directors, individual donors, patrons, businesses and foundations. We are especially grateful to the volunteers who assist us with activities such as set building, ushering, event planning, brochure layout, photography and administration. We look forward to many more years of producing exciting and innovative live theatre that lifts spirits, raises awareness, creates conversation, stimulates emotion, and provides respite from life's stresses.

### **IN TANDEM THEATRE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Ellen Maxey, President  
Daniel Glaser, Treasurer

Dennis Kois, Vice President  
Scott Berkes, Secretary

Scott Berkes, Milt Flieller, Richard Ippolito, Greg Kliebhan, Sharveta Parker,  
Deb Revolinski, Leigh Wallace Tabak

### **ADVISORY BOARD**

Dan Kattman, Reinhart Boerner Van Duren S.C.  
Claude Krawczyk, O'Neil Cannon Hollman DeJong and Laing S.C.