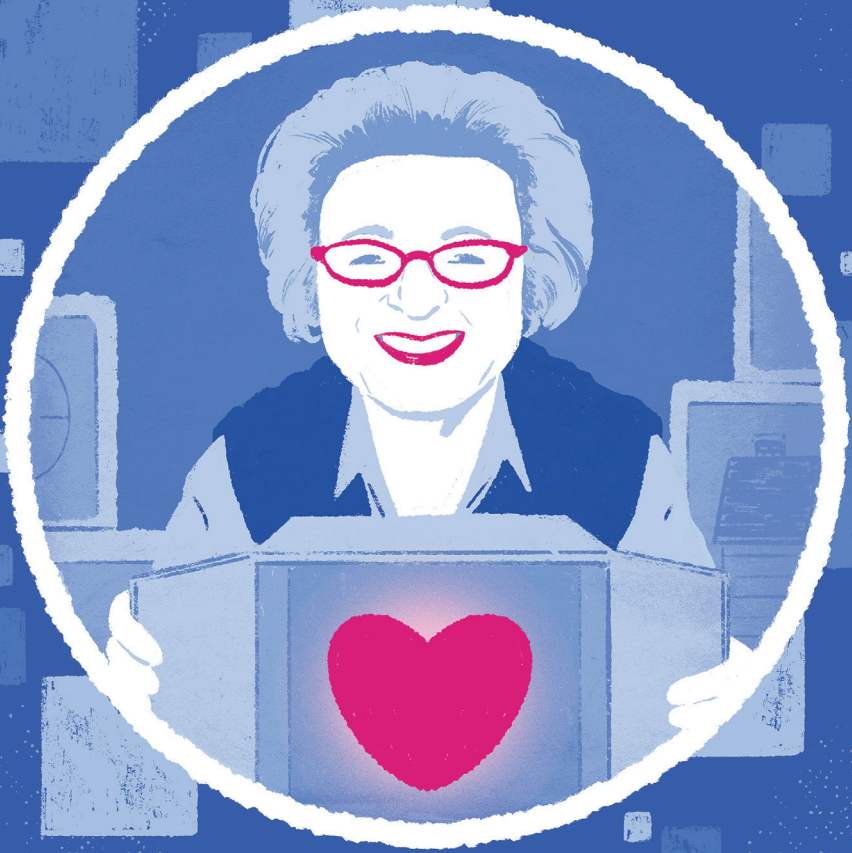


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APR 1 - 23  
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*Theater J's Production of*

# BECOMING DR. RUTH



**DOBAMA THEATRE**



**BOTH HILARIOUS AND POIGNANT, THIS STORY  
IS ABOUT THE HODGES – A BLACK FAMILY  
THAT HAS RECENTLY MOVED TO A  
SUBURBAN WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD**

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B.J. Tindal

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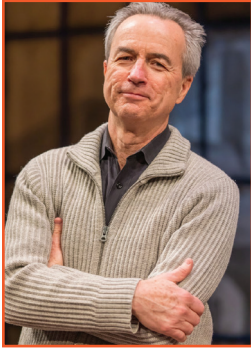
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## SIZE DOESN'T MATTER



Much of what we learn about Dr. Westheimer in *Becoming Dr. Ruth* is a marvel. Her many lives from being a child survivor of the Holocaust to a renowned sexual therapist, known to the world by her first name, are as inspirational as wondrous. It's as if she had a mission on this earth that would be undeterred no matter the obstacles — many of them life-threatening. Perhaps her fearlessness to push past expectations and assumptions set her up for her willingness to talk about one of our well-guarded taboos, sexual health. She is the literal “one-of-a-kind.” Who else can you think of that has been a star of talk shows and radio, and a best-selling author in this realm, and all in a diminutive body with a disarming smile and piercing eyes.

What a powerhouse! She never bullied, but always got answers from any interviewer or interviewee willing to engage with her. Her strength, her conviction is what emanates from her indomitable spirit. *Becoming Dr. Ruth* celebrates not only this trailblazer; it also reminds us that great things can come in small packages.

As it is with plays that feature only one cast member, such is this smart one written by Mark St. Germain. The fullness of Dr. Ruth's humanity, of her incredible journey, of her many relationships along the way are more than enough for a theatrical evening. This production provides an intimate look at a most fascinating person. That it is presented in one of our smaller venues, the engaging and dynamic Outcalt Theatre, gives further credence to the notion that size doesn't matter. Or rather, it matters in the most unexpected ways.

Enjoy.

**Mark Cuddy**

Guest Artistic & Managing Director of the 2022-23 Season

### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The cast, crew, and creative team of this production and the CPH staff would like to acknowledge those of the Shawnee, Miami, Erie, Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Haudenosaunee peoples, whose lands we stand on, and the nearly 28,000 Native American people who live in Northeast Ohio today who represent over 100 tribal nations. For information about the lands on which you reside, visit [native.land.ca](https://www.native.land.ca).





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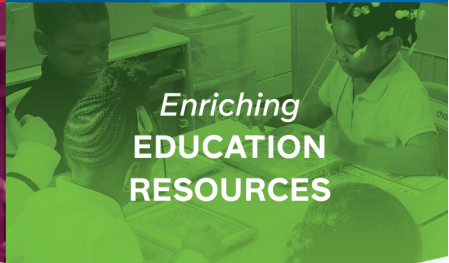
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**MARK CUDDY**

GUEST ARTISTIC & MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE 2022-23 SEASON

Welcomes you to  
Theater J's Production of

# BECOMING DR. RUTH

by **MARK ST. GERMAIN**

Directed by **HOLLY TWYFORD**

Starring **NAOMI JACOBSON\***

SCENIC DESIGNER  
**PAIGE HATHAWAY**

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
**COLIN K. BILLS**

SOUND DESIGNER  
**KENNY NEAL**

PROJECTIONS DESIGNER  
**SARAH TUNDERMAN**

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**CAROLYN DICKEY**

WIG DESIGNER  
**ANNE NESMITH**

STAGE MANAGER  
**PAMELA SALLING\***

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER  
**KITTY WEN**

April 1–23, 2023

**OUTCALT THEATRE**

\* \* \*

Cleveland Play House's Production Staff is responsible for the sets, costumes, lighting, props, furniture, scenic painting, sound, and/or special effects used in this production.

*Becoming Dr. Ruth* is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc. New York.

This production premiered at Theater J, a program of the Edlavitch DC JCC,  
Adam Immerwahr, Artistic Director; David Lloyd Olson, Managing Director





# SYNOPSIS

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The triumphant true story of “America’s Favorite Sex Therapist!” Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer changed the way we talk about sex and relationships with her hit ‘80s radio call-in show, *Sexually Speaking*. Now, she welcomes us into her home to share the unlikely path she took to becoming “Dr. Ruth.” With her trademark wry humor, warmth, and candor, Dr. Ruth recounts her life’s many roles — several of which are quite surprising. This life-affirming solo show is a testament to resilience, forging your own path, and the joy of human connection.

**TIME:** June 9, 1997

**PLACE:** Washington Heights, New York

## CAST

---

DR. RUTH K. WESTHEIMER ..... NAOMI JACOBSON\*

\*Indicates member of Actors’ Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers in the United States.

The director is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, a national theatrical labor union.

The scenic, costume, lighting, sound, and projections designers in LORT Theatres are represented by United Scenic Artists, Local USA-829 of the IATSE.

## ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE

---

SCENIC DESIGN ASSOCIATE ..... Sarah Beth Hall

WARDROBE SUPERVISOR ..... Jillian England

COVID COMPLIANCE OFFICERS ..... Kate Beckley, Virginia Raffaele

STAGE CARPENTER ..... Nick Lucas

THIS PLAY WILL BE PERFORMED WITHOUT AN INTERMISSION.

Wowed by the set? Feel free to snap a photo before the show, during intermission, or after the show. Don’t forget to tag Cleveland Play House (@cleveplayhouse on Twitter and Instagram) and use the hashtag #CPHDrRuth.

During the performance, photography, video, and/or audio recording by any means is strictly prohibited.



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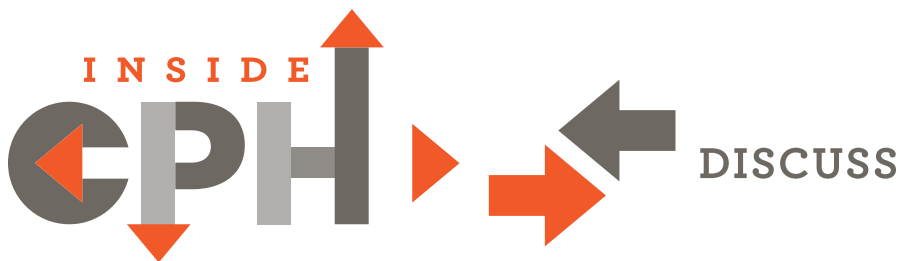


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by *Craig Joseph, Interim Literary Director*

Naomi Jacobson has a long history with *Becoming Dr. Ruth*. In 2018, Adam Immerwahr, then artistic director of Theater J, invited her to play the famed sex therapist. She was intrigued by the story, but was only interested in doing the play non-traditionally: “I didn’t want it to become a realistic treatment of whether or not she should move from this apartment, but rather about her emotional journey.” So the production team developed a unique concept for that production, re-mounted it in October 2021, and now share the story at CPH.

CJ: “What surprised you about Dr. Ruth when you first did the show?”

NJ: “Beyond the big pieces of her history, I was fascinated to learn that she watched Shirley Temple as a child, and that she sensed that one of her jobs in the world was to bring joy and happiness to people. Her grandmother instilled in her: ‘Always smile and be happy.’ And I identify with this because — as the youngest of five kids — my job was to entertain and bring joy, which was exhausting. So I had to become aware that, while it’s a gift to others, it could also serve as a way of escaping pain, sadness, and loss. It was a surprise to me to discover that she perhaps felt the same sort of pressure and maybe turned it into something useful — just as being an actress has helped me become a more whole person.”

“When I met her in person? She is an elderly, tiny, fierce human being. She came up to me after I performed the show. When she talks to you, she zeroes in on you with laser beam eyes, and there’s nothing else in the room. It’s you and her. She

took my hand — I think two or three of my fingers — and it was a vice grip. She has one of the most powerful holds I’ve ever experienced. She’s totally present with you — fascinated, delighted, and curious about you — asking lots of questions. She’s insatiable. We were eating dinner together and she wanted to know all about my marriage and sex life. It was hilarious, but she is authentically fascinated by the humanity around her.”

CJ: “What has changed since the last time you performed the show, and how might that affect your approach this time?”

NJ: “I am much more aware of the limited time I have with people. I have lost some people that I love, and I have a very deep sense of my need to maintain connections with friends who go way back, who knew me when I was younger. And I’m amazed that Dr. Ruth is still in touch with people who were in that Swiss orphanage. Last time around, I sort of got that, but I didn’t [fully] get it, so I think there are things that will hit me deeper emotionally. I have a new sense of the importance of connections, and how critical they are for mental and emotional well-being. The time that I have with people who are aging has become really important.”

“Also, there is no room in my life anymore for grudges or despair; my energy is too precious. I don’t ever know the whole story of what was going on with someone at a specific moment, what happened an hour before my exchange with them. Why would I hold on to who they were in that moment, rather than communicating with them in a way that allows them to evolve into someone better?”

CJ: “Are there aspects to the script that you’ll delve into more deeply this time around?”

NJ: “There’s one moment in the play that I never connected with; I take on another character that is talking to Dr. Ruth. I’ve never liked my interpretation of it. I’m excited to go back into that moment, because it’s about what it means to have a homeland, to leave your homeland, or to have your homeland come under attack. Today, the immediacy of people fighting to save their homelands is much more visceral to me. It’s in my world every day — not just an idea — with what’s happening in Ukraine and even here in the USA to a different extent. That’s always been in the world, but it’s landed for me with more urgency lately, and I think that’s going to affect my portrayal of how many times Dr. Ruth had to

change her homeland — and the importance of Israel to her.”

CJ: “How do you hope this story will affect Cleveland audiences?”

NJ: “After taking on Dr. Ruth’s persona the past few years, I have a deeper sense of optimism, of hope, of trusting myself to fail and keep going, of trusting others and seeing new possibilities in them. There’s the possibility of building new things out of despair. Each one of us has the capacity to overcome hardship and obstacles; we have the choice at every moment to look forward, to take responsibility, to be accountable, to choose honesty, and to create joy and a nurturing environment. And that’s why I keep doing this show, because I can get behind this message.”



## WHO'S WHO



**NAOMI JACOBSON** (*Dr. Ruth K. Westheimer*) is excited to be in Cleveland for the first time. She's an affiliated artist at Shakespeare Theatre Company and a company member at Woolly Mammoth Theatre in DC, with credits at The Kennedy Center, Arena Stage, Studio Theatre, Ford's, Signature, Folger, Round House, Olney, Wolf Trap, and Theatre J, where this production originated. Regional credits include the Guthrie Theatre, the Goodman Theatre, Milwaukee Rep, Center Stage, Cincinnati Playhouse, Indiana Rep, Arizona Theatre Company, Delaware Theatre Co., and the Berkshire Theatre Festival. She's done a few independent films, a network TV show, and one off-Broadway play. Voice over work includes NPR, PBS, Discovery Channel, and the Smithsonian. Naomi has received three Helen Hayes Awards and 15 nominations, the inaugural Lunt-Fontanne Fellowship, the Anderson-Hopkins Award for Theatre Excellence, and a DC Arts Commission Individual Artist Grant. She coaches professionally and teaches graduate students at the Shakespeare Theatre Academy for Classical Acting and University of Maryland Opera Studio. More details at [naomijacobson.com](http://naomijacobson.com)

**MARK ST. GERMAIN** (*Playwright*) is the author of *Freud's Last Session*, which ran for two years off-Broadway, closing on July 24, 2012. The play has been staged in Argentina since 2012, and in repertory in Sweden, Australia, and Denmark. His play *Becoming Dr. Ruth* premiered in July 2012 at the Barrington Stage Company in the Berkshires, played at Hartford Theaterworks, and was brought to NYC to the Westside Theatre. *Scott and Hem in the Garden of Allah* co-premiered in 2013 at the Contemporary American Theater Festival and Barrington Stage Company. His play *The Best of Enemies*, first produced by the Barrington Stage Company, is now being produced throughout the country. *The Fabulous Lipitones*, a musical comedy co-written with John Markus, premiered at the Theatrical Outfit in Atlanta in 2013, and then at Goodspeed Playhouse. Mark's other plays include *Camping With Henry and Tom* (Lucille Lortel and Outer

Critics Circle awards), *Ears on a Beatle*, *The God Committee*, *Out of Gas on Lover's Leap*, and *Dancing Lessons* (which premiered at the Barrington Stage Festival). Mark wrote the Tammy Wynette musical *Stand By Your Man*, which began at the Ryman Theater in Nashville. With composer Charles Strouse, he co-wrote the book for his adaptation of Dreiser's *American Tragedy*; and with composer Randy Courts, Mark has written the perennial musical *The Gifts of the Magi*, as well as *Johnny Pye* and *the Foolkiller* (AT&T Award Grant) and *Jack's Holiday* (Playwrights Horizons). Television work includes writer-creative consultant for *The Cosby Show* and Dick Wolf's *Crime and Punishment*. He co-wrote director Carroll Ballard's film *Duma*, and produced and directed the documentary *My Dog, An Unconditional Love Story*, with Richard Gere, Glenn Close, Edward Albee, and others. Mark also wrote the award-winning children's book *Three Cups*. He is an associate artist of the Barrington Stage Company, a recipient of the William Inge Festival's New Voices Award, and a member of the Dramatists Guild and the Writers Guild East. Mark is an alumnus of New Dramatists.

**HOLLY TWYFORD** (*Director*) is a Washington, DC-based director and actor and is thrilled to be at Cleveland Play House for the first time. She is excited to once again be collaborating with her amazing *Dr. Ruth* team. Ms. Twyford's Washington area directing credits include, most recently, *Gloria: A Life* by Emily Mann at Theater J as well as *The Upstairs Department*, a new play by Chelsea Marcantel at Signature Theatre, where she previously directed *Escaped Alone*; *Stop Kiss* with No Rules Theatre Company; *A Lump of Coal for Christmas* at Adventure Theatre MTC; *Edgar and Annabel* and *Mary Kate Olsen is in Love* at Studio Theatre; *The Amish Project* with Factory 449 for which she received a Helen Hayes Award nomination. Ms. Twyford directed a Zoom production of *Steel Magnolias* for Ford's Theatre as well as an audio version of *Romeo and Juliet* with the Shakespeare Theatre Company's Academy for Classical Acting. As an actor, she has performed in more than 80 productions in many of the highly acclaimed theatres in and around the DC



metropolitan area as well as nationally, most recently playing the Stage Manager in Shakespeare Theatre Company's *Our Town*.

**PAIGE HATHAWAY** (*Scenic Designer*) is a freelance scenic designer based in the Washington, DC area. Previously at CPH, Paige designed *The Three Musketeers*. In the DC area, she recently designed *On the Far End* and *Jennifer Who is Leaving* at Round House Theatre, *The High Ground* at Arena Stage, *No Place to Go* at Signature Theatre, *Dance Nation* at Olney Theatre Center, *Gloria: A Life at Theater J*, *Bars and Measures* at Mosaic Theatre, and *Ken Ludwig's Baskerville* at Everyman Theatre. Regionally, Paige has designed *Much Ado About Nothing* at Pennsylvania Shakespeare Festival, *Mary Poppins* at The Muny in St. Louis, and *Fireflies* at Salt Lake City's Pioneer Theatre. Paige received her MFA in scenic design from the University of Maryland and her BFA in scenic design from the University of Oklahoma. She is a proud member of USA 829. Instagram: @paigehathawaydesign Website: paigehathawaydesign.com

**COLIN K. BILLS** (*Lighting Designer*) (he/him/his) makes his CPH debut. A Washington, DC based theater artist, he is a Company Member and Board Member at Woolly Mammoth where he has designed over 50 productions including *Ain't No Mo'*, *An Octoroon*, *Stupid Fucking Bird*, *Clybourne Park*, and *Dead Man's Cell Phone*. As a conspirator with the devised theater company dog & pony dc, he co-wrote, directed and co-designed *A Killing Game* (seen at the Cleveland Public Theatre in 2014). His designs have been seen nationally and internationally. He has won three Helen Hayes Awards and is a recipient of a Princess Grace Fellowship in Theater. He has taught design at Howard University and is a graduate of Dartmouth College.

**KENNY NEAL** (*Sound Designer*) is a Helen Hayes Award recipient (*The Royale* at Olney Theatre Center/1st Stage) and seven-time nominated sound designer, composer, and arranger. DC area credits include Studio Theatre (*English*, *Straight White Men*, *Jumpers for Goalposts*, *Choir Boy*); Olney Theatre Center (*A Nice Indian Boy*, *Dance Nation*, *The Royale*, *Oil*); The Kennedy Center (*She a Gem*, *Digging Up Dessa*); Signature Theatre (*The Upstairs Department*, *Daphne's Dive*,

*Easy Women Smoking Loose Cigarettes*, *Heisenberg*, *John*, *The Gulf*); Prologue Theatre (*Recent Tragic Events*); Constellation Theatre Company (*The Master and Margarita*); Theater Alliance (*Klytemnestra*); 1st Stage (*The Last Match*, *Airness*, *columbinus*, *Jesus Hopped the A' Train*, *Well*, *Floyd Collins*, *Old Wicked Songs*, *Bat Boy*); Factory 449 (*Agnes of God*); Taffety Punk (*Pramkicker*, *Mom Baby God*); as well as production for NextStop Theatre, WSC Avant Bard, The Welders, Rorschach Theatre, Imagination Stage, and Adventure Theatre MTC. Education: BA in music history and composition from St. Mary's College of Maryland.

**SARAH TUNDERMANN** (*Projection Designer*) is excited about her debut at Cleveland Play House. She designed projections for two previous productions of *Becoming Dr. Ruth* at Theatre J. Recent regional projection design credits include the 2022-2023 season of Maryland Lyric Opera: *Tomas* and *the Library Lady*, *And in this Corner: Cassius Clay*, *School House Rock Live*, and *Snowy Day* (Children's Theatre of Charlotte); *Corduroy* and *Escape from Peligro Island* (Imagination Stage); *She the People* (Second City at Woolly Mammoth); *Watsons go to Birmingham* (Kennedy Center); *E2*, *All She Must Possess* and *The Other Place* (Rep Stage); *Queens Girl in the World* and *Queens Girl in Africa* (Everyman Theatre); *Paper Dolls* and *Queens Girl in Africa* (Mosaic Theatre Company); Sarah holds an MFA in lighting design from the University of Maryland and she resides in Baltimore. sarahundermann.com

**PAMELA SALLING** (*Stage Manager*) (she/her) is a stage manager for theater, opera, music, and dance. Recent productions include *Music to Accompany a Departure* for the L.A. Master Chorale, which premiered at Walt Disney Concert Hall and will open the Salzburg Festival this summer, and the Wayne Shorter and esperanza spaulding opera ...(*Iphigenia*) [sic] which toured to MASS MoCA, ArtsEmerson, CalPerformances, The Broad, and John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Other select credits include *The Apple Family Plays: Scenes from Life in the Country*, *Othello*, *Into the Woods*, *The Agony and the Ecstasy of Steve Jobs*, *Knickerbocker*, and *Neighbors* (The Public Theater); *Blood Knot* (Signature Theatre Company); *A Family for All Occasions*, *Thinner Than Water*, and *Massacre*

(*Sing to Your Children*) (Labyrinth Theater Company); *Hamlet* and *Love's Labour's Lost* (The Old Globe); *How to Be a Rock Critic* (ArtsEmerson); *Petrol Station* (Kennedy Center); and extensive work with director Peter Sellars.

**KITTY WEN 温婉圻** (*Assistant Stage Manager*) is grateful to return to Cleveland Play House, having stage managed the family theatre tour of *Teddy Bear Mountain* and ASM *The Great Leap*. She recently completed her Disney College Program and Dobama Theatre Stage Management internship. Previous stage management credits include Idaho Shakespeare Festival, Karamu House, Cleveland Public Theatre, Ohio City Theatre Project, Baldwin Wallace, Independence Theatre, and Cassidy Theatre. She graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree from Baldwin Wallace.

**CLEVELAND PLAY HOUSE**, founded in 1915 and recipient of the 2015 Regional Theatre Tony Award, is America's first professional regional theatre. Throughout its rich history, CPH has remained dedicated to its mission to inspire, stimulate, and entertain diverse audiences across Northeast Ohio by producing plays and theatre education programs of the highest professional standards. CPH has produced more than 100 world and/or American premieres, and over its long history more than 12 million people have attended over 1,600 productions. Today, Cleveland Play House celebrates the beginning of its second century of service while performing in three state-of-the-art venues at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland.

**MARK CUDDY** (*Guest Artistic & Managing Director of the 2022-23 Season*) joined Cleveland Play House as Interim Artistic Director in July 2022. Mr. Cuddy served as artistic director of Geva Theatre Center in Rochester, New York, for 27 years. He led Geva through a renaissance of artistic and institutional growth with a diverse repertory, topflight artists, wide-reaching educational programs, and a commitment to new-play development. Mr. Cuddy is a founding member of the board of directors for the Rochester Fringe Festival that just concluded its fourth year, and served on the board of directors of the only national service organization for non-profit the-

atres, Theatre Communications Group. As a director, Mr. Cuddy is known for his productions of musicals, contemporary comedies, and premieres. He also directed the CPH/Geva co-production of *Clybourne Park*. His Geva productions include *Once*, *The Humans*, *Ring of Fire*, *Good People*, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *Superior Donuts*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* co-directed with Skip Greer, and Company, as well as his adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* with music and lyrics by Gregg Coffin. Among his many other Geva credits are *The Music Man*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Fences*, *Five Course Love*, *A Christmas Story*, and *Pride and Prejudice* (co-adaptor), and the world premieres of *Convenience* (musical) by Gregg Coffin, *Theophilus North* by Matthew Burnett from Thornton Wilder (also at Arena Stage), *Splitting Infinity* by Jamie Pachino, *Famous Orpheus* by Oyamo (choreography by Garth Fagan), *House and Garden* by Alan Ayckbourn (East Coast premiere), and *That Was Then* (American premiere). Mr. Cuddy has also served as artistic director of Sacramento Theatre Company, producing director of the Idaho Shakespeare Festival and as a member of the directing staff of the Denver Center Theatre Company. He has served on the review panels for the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. He received his B.A. in theatre/honors from the University of Massachusetts where he was a Commonwealth Scholar.

**THEATER J** is a nationally renowned, professional theater in Washington, D.C., that celebrates, explores, and struggles with the complexities and nuances of both the Jewish experience and the universal human condition. Theater J's work illuminates and examines ethical questions of our time, inter-cultural experiences that parallel our own, and the changing landscape of Jewish identities. As the nation's largest and most prominent Jewish theater, Theater J aims to preserve and expand a rich Jewish theatrical tradition and to create community and commonality through theater-going experiences. Proudly a program of the Edlavitch DC Jewish Community Center, Theater J is led by artistic director Hayley Finn and managing director David Lloyd Olson.



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Cleveland Play House and Cleveland State University have a formal education partnership that enhances the learning opportunities of CSU students. For more information, call the CSU Theatre Department at 216-687-2113.

**TCG** Cleveland Play House is a constituent of Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre.



Playhouse Square is a not-for-profit performing arts center that presents and produces a wide variety of performing arts, advances arts education and creates a destination that is a superior location for entertainment, business and residential living, thereby strengthening the economic vitality of the region.

**Playbill Editor:** Linda Feagler

For advertising information, please contact

**Matthew Kraniske:** 216-377-3681





## Video Killed the Vaudeville Star

By 1925 the popularity of motion pictures was spelling the decline of vaudeville. Seeing the writing on the screen, the Keith Organization (which ran the Palace Theatre, now Connor Palace) opted to introduce films into its schedule of reduced vaudeville bookings. *The Iron Horse*, a John Ford epic about the construction of the transcontinental railroad, was the first silent film to play the Palace. It starred George O'Brien and Madge Bellamy, and a ticket cost a whopping 25 cents!

## No Butts About It

In the 1920s, women were being enticed by such advertising as “reach for a Lucky instead of a sweet.” Although ladies who smoked in public were still frowned upon in 1922, the management decided to buck the controversy by creating the private Egyptian Smoking Room. Located off the main lobby, it allowed female guests a proper place to smoke. The room’s walls were of Hindu design; its carved furniture

upholstered in a black and gold brocade Egyptian motif; wrought iron Egyptian-styled lamps were topped with red silk shades, and a rare carpet from India covered the floor.

Although the room retains the name of the Egyptian Smoking Room to this day, it is now used for administrative purposes because no smoking is allowed in any of the Playhouse Square spaces.

## Knot Your Average Carpet

The original carpet that adorned the Connor Palace Grand Hall (main lobby) when the venue opened in 1922, was touted as the largest carpet in the world to be woven in one piece. Gray with wine-colored roses, the 67-foot by 40-foot carpet was created in Maffersdorf, Czecho-Slovakia and contained 9,000,272 knots — all tied by hand.

## Theatrical Vermin In No Need of the Orkin Man

Mice and flies are two pests you would never

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stand for in your house, but both are necessary to every theater house! Mice are actually special shields placed over microphones on the floor at the front of a stage. Flies is the entire area above the stage (not visible to the audience) where scenery is hung and stored. Flymen (stagehands operating the counterweight system and flying scenery) often are located on the fly floor, which is the work area above the stage floor.

### Young STARS Shine At Playhouse Square

You might see volunteer RedCoats from time to time who look like they're not old enough to vote — and they aren't. These youths are part of the successful STARS (Students Take A Role at the Square) program, where older students volunteer to usher at Broadway Series shows, concerts and other special events at the theaters. While the STARS program can be interesting and fun for all students, it becomes a particularly invaluable opportunity to gain experience and behind-the-scenes knowledge for those students who are planning future careers in the performing arts.

### Say Goodnight, Gracie

Legendary comedy duo George Burns and Gracie Allen were married in Cleveland January 7, 1926 during their Playhouse Square booking. A brief, early-morning ceremony was performed by a Justice of the Peace, after which the newlyweds checked into the Statler Hotel. George's older brother and his family (who lived in Akron) came up to Cleveland that afternoon to celebrate with the couple before George and Gracie returned to their room to honeymoon.

At 2 a.m. the phone rang. It was fellow comedian Jack Benny calling from Omaha. Immediately recognizing Jack's voice, George cut him off saying, "Send up two orders of ham and eggs," then hung up.

Ten minutes later the phone rang. It was Benny again. This time George interrupted his friend with, "You forgot the ketchup!" and hung up on Benny a second time. Half an hour later came a knock at the door. It was a waiter with two orders of ham and eggs. Trying to keep a straight face the waiter announced, "Compliments of Mr. Jack Benny from Omaha!"

As George liked to tell it, the newlyweds ate



their Benny breakfast at 2:30 a.m., and, when they were done, Gracie said, “George, this was the high point of the night!”

### The KeyBank State Theatre Murals

The four murals on the walls of the KeyBank State Theatre lobby were painted by American Modernist James Daugherty (1890-1974), whose work hangs in the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum and the Smithsonian. One of the murals, *The Spirit of Cinema*, was featured on the cover of *Life* magazine on February 20, 1970. It was that national attention that became the convincing argument to save the venue from the wrecking ball. Destruction of the State would also have meant the loss of the original historic Daugherty murals, since they are painted directly on the walls. Today they are the only Daugherty works which remain at the original site where they were painted.

### Performers Help Restore Playhouse Square

During her 1996 run of *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, legendary Broadway star Chita Rivera

was given a guided tour of Playhouse Square. As she followed her tour guide into the State auditorium, an excited Chita pointed to the mezzanine railing and proudly exclaimed, I helped paint that! Indeed, she had. In 1984, Chita had last played Playhouse Square when much restoration remained, and during her free time willingly added her brush strokes to the history of the State.

Likewise, Mary Travers of Peter, Paul & Mary fame also performed at the KeyBank State Theatre several times during its early restoration. She became so enthusiastic over the restoration process that she would climb the scaffolding and help paint the ceiling. Like Chita, on a return visit, Mary pointed out the ceiling area that she had helped paint (just-above-and-to-the-left of the Men’s Room doorway on the mezzanine).

### The GE Chandelier

North America’s largest outdoor chandelier, the 20-foot tall GE Chandelier is adorned with 4200 crystals. To find out how it was made, visit the Playhouse Square YouTube channel.





### A Change in History?

One of many fascinating items to be found in the book *Playhouse Square: An Entertaining History* deals with the infamous John Wilkes Booth. Booth performed locally at the old Academy of Music, which was one of the first drama schools in the country and was located at 1371 W. 6th Street.

It was at that Cleveland Academy where he would play his last role prior to performing at Washington D.C.'s Ford Theatre where he would assassinate President Lincoln. (Might history have been changed if the Academy had held over Booth's play for an extended run?)

### Connor Palace Trivia

Before the days of clothes dryers, touring performers were often forced to pull still-damp clothes off the drying line when it was time to pack and leave. During the vaudeville era, the Connor Palace (known then as the Palace) became known as one of the most performer-friendly venues in the country because of its many backstage amenities, one of which included a drying room. In this large room, wet clothes could be hung and hot air was continuously blown into the area to hasten the drying time.

### Singers' Secrets

Repeat three times: Performer packs pickle for perfect pipes. Singer Anita Baker surprised backstage workers during her sold out shows by keeping an ample supply of pickle juice in her dressing room — using it to gargle! (No report as to whether Anita acquired the pickle practice during her two pregnancies.) Likewise, another unusual gargling agent was the preference of singer Millie Jackson who required a certain imported beer as her gargle-of-choice.

### There Goes the Neighborhood!

The 1870s ushered in the golden age for Euclid Avenue as the street became a stretch of grand mansions, with grounds often extending as far as Lake Erie, and stately elm trees arching over the avenue. Called Millionaire's Row, it was the address where all the best families lived.

But by Cleveland's Centennial in 1896, Euclid Avenue residents were likely muttering, Well, there goes the neighborhood! as the dirt street was paved with sandstone, and businessmen began to buy up and tear down the mansions and towering elms to make way for commercial ventures.

Streetcar lines on the once totally residential





stretch hastened the creation of a commercial district, forcing wealthy families to move even farther east on Euclid Avenue. In another 30 years, the district would see the birth of the five main theaters that would eventually become Playhouse Square.

### KeyBank State Theatre Trivia

The stage of the KeyBank State Theatre is so large that a typical high school gymnasium (complete with basketball court and bleachers) could easily fit on stage. As another point of comparison, three of the Mimi Ohio Theatre stages could fit onto the State's stage.

### Hanna Theatre Trivia

Since its opening in 1921, the Hanna Theatre has been the site of two world premieres: Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Me and Juliette* in 1953 and, in 1974, *Odyssey* by Michel Legrand, starring Yul Brynner. Another first occurred in 1937, when Gilbert and Sullivan's first Cleveland-staged opera was performed at the Hanna by the D'Oyly Carte Company from London.

### Connor Palace: A Three Stooges Favorite

In his biography, *Moe Howard & The Three Stooges*, Moe Howard wrote about the plight of dressing rooms on the road. Although dressing rooms were usually spartan at best and a hovel at worst, Howard had nothing but praise for the Connor Palace (known then as the Palace Theatre): "This theater was built without missing a thought for the actors' comfort. The Palace was beautiful not only outside and in the auditorium, but also backstage. Most impressive was the second floor, which sported a regulation-size pool table, chess tables, comfortable chairs, an ice machine and soft drinks, playing cards, cigars — it had all the facilities of a private club. In the basement was a laundry room. There was even a nursery for youngsters.

Best of all were the dressing rooms, heavily carpeted with mirrored walls and make-up tables. They had everything in them, right down to padded coat hangers."

### KeyBank State Theatre Trivia

Above the fireplace at the rear of the KeyBank



*Muses of Poems and Music*

State Theatre auditorium, an original mural hangs despite its near-tragic loss. Removed from the wall in the early 1970s prior to the scheduled demolition of the venue, the mural eventually turned up in the basement of a piano store and was repurchased by Playhouse Square for \$200.

The recovered mural was badly torn, having originally been painted on burlap then glued to the wall. The challenge of restoring the artwork fell to the Theater District's Bonfoey Company. Artisans sanded the glue from the burlap and attached the cleaned mural to canvas via beeswax.

The next step was to clean and restore the work where needed. A stretcher for the canvas had to be custom-made. To eliminate tears and wrinkles, the stretcher was designed to expand and contract with the theater's climactic changes and held together with springs (no nails or screws). It took Bonfoey employees 18 months to restore the painting at a cost of \$8,500.

Although the creator of this mural is unknown, it is suspected to be Italian artist Sampa Trotti, who had painted three murals for

the original Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby. (Those murals were later destroyed in the Ohio's 1964 lobby fire.)

### Kennedy's Cabaret Trivia

The bar in Kennedy's (the lower level cabaret space accessed by way of the Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby), might be familiar to Cleveland oldtimers. The former home of the bar was the Elegant Hog Saloon when the tavern was located on Buckeye Road.

### World's Longest Lobby Explained

In 1920 as the Loew's chain anticipated building in the area that would come to be known as Playhouse Square, it was discovered there wasn't sufficient room to build two theaters side by side in the available space.

Since it was important that the proposed theater marquees be located on Euclid Avenue, an architectural plan was devised. Even though the KeyBank State Theatre would be completed and open 21 months before the Connor Palace, it was decided to build the State behind the

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Connor Palace. This led to the construction of the State's 320-foot-long lobby, reported to be the longest theater lobby in the world. The Mimi Ohio Theatre would then be built on the other side of the State, giving all three theaters the desired Euclid Avenue marquee frontage.

### What Would It Cost to Build Them Today?

Even though the Connor Palace is not the largest of the Playhouse Square venues, it was the most costly to build (\$3.5 million) by the time it premiered on Nov. 6, 1922. The largest theater, the State, (opened Feb. 5, 1921) was built at a cost of \$2 million; the Ohio (Feb. 14, 1921) also cost \$2 million, and the Allen's costs totaled \$1.9 million when it opened April 1, 1921. (Exact building costs for the Hanna Theatre — which opened March 28, 1921 — have yet to be uncovered.)

### A Phoenix from the Ashes

In 1964, the Mimi Ohio Theatre lobby and auditorium were destroyed by fire. When the fledgling Playhouse Square organization

restored the spaces in 1982, funding and time constraints made it possible only for the auditorium to be fully restored. Thanks to a gift from the George Gund Foundation, the lobby was re-created in its original splendor in 2016. You can watch a documentary about the project, "Restoring the Legacy," on Playhouse Square's YouTube channel.

### Re-Creating History

We call the completed Mimi Ohio Theatre George Gund Foundation Lobby project a "re-creation" rather than a restoration. Why? There was nothing left to restore after a 1964 fire destroyed the space. To reproduce the lobby's original 1921 splendor, architects, restoration specialists and Playhouse Square staff conducted exhaustive research of the original drawings by architect Thomas Lamb, photo archives and a few remaining bits of ornamental plaster detail to gain a thorough understanding of the space and inform the plans for re-creating the lobby.

### Broadway to Buildings

Where do the arts and real estate go hand-in-hand? At Playhouse Square, of course! As the theaters began to be restored in the early 1980s, it was thought that developers would step in to build and open businesses around them. When that didn't happen, Playhouse Square began to steward development of the surrounding neighborhood. In 1999, Playhouse Square became the first performing arts center with a real estate services division, which manages the one million square feet of property owned by the organization and another 1.5 million square feet outside the theater district. Other performing arts centers have since looked to our expertise as a model.

### YPs Take the Lead

Best known as the masterminds behind the annual Jump Back Ball benefit, Playhouse Square's young professionals group — Partners — was formed in 1991. Since then, hundreds of young professionals engage with Playhouse Square each year to build leadership skills, raise funds and volunteer in support of our not-for-profit mission, enjoy shows together, network and have fun!



### Keeping Up the KeyBank State Theatre

First restored more than 30 years ago, the KeyBank State Theatre was repainted from the street to the proscenium in 2015. The new, cohesive color palette showcases the beauty and craftsmanship of the nearly 100-year-old theater. It took 25 painters 12,500 hours and 595 gallons of paint in 15 different colors to complete the project, which also included 6000 sheets of new metal leafing in the auditorium dome and the application of a historically accurate wall-covering design. While the theater was dark, its lighting fixtures and restrooms received major upgrades.

### What's in a Logo?

The Playhouse Square logo we use today – a tilted burgundy square with a capital P in its center – was introduced in 2008 to capture the enduring spirit of entertainment and excitement. Each of the logo's graphic elements has meaning: the exclamation point with a star in the "P" symbolizes excitement and innovation; the swirl in the "P" represents creativity and forward motion; the tilted square symbolizes Playhouse Square as a destination; and the burgundy color gives nod to the color scheme of our historic theaters.

### Going Green

While red is the color most often associated with theaters, Playhouse Square is making efforts to go "green." You will find receptacles for recycling paper, plastic and cans, along with those designated specifically for the program you're currently reading, throughout the complex. Lighting fixtures are being switched to LED for increased energy efficiency. And the Playhouse Square administrative office is making strides towards going paperless.

### Patterns in Plaster

As you walk through the theaters, you may notice various patterns within the plaster decoration. Common are dentil, lamb tongue, rope and rosettes. Other patterns you may see have been associated with certain meanings since they were first used hundreds or even thousands of years ago, such as the acanthus leaf (immortality), egg and dart (life and death), and the palm leaf, first used in ancient Egypt as a reference to the Nile River. In the KeyBank State Theatre, if you look closely and carefully, you can find ox skulls, which were believed to offer protection from natural elements. And throughout the theaters, you will find griffins, mythical creatures thought of as guardians.



# GUEST SERVICES AT PLAYHOUSE SQUARE



## Guest Assistance

For questions or service that may provide a quality, entertaining experience, please see the House Manager on duty. A RedCoat usher can direct you to their office location.

## Smoking Policy

Smoking, including electronic smoking or “vaping,” is not permitted indoors at Playhouse Square.

## We Love Hearing From Our Guests

Your feedback is important. For matters that are not immediate or for additional questions you may have, please access our online comment form at [playhousesquare.org/contact-us](http://playhousesquare.org/contact-us). We read and share all comments with the staff and meet often to discuss how we can improve upon your experience at Playhouse Square.

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## Beware of Ticket Scalpers

Buy your tickets **ONLY** from the Playhouse Square Ticket Office, at [playhousesquare.org](http://playhousesquare.org), by phone at 216-241-6000 or your licensed group/travel leader. (We cannot guarantee validity or admittance for tickets purchased elsewhere, nor can we issue replacement tickets if they are lost or stolen). Help us keep ticket prices affordable and fair for everyone.

## Camera Policy

Cameras, including cameras on cell phones and other personal handheld devices, audio/video recorders and flash photography are strictly prohibited.

## Cell Phones

The experience of a live performance can be ruined by the interruption of ringtones, vibrating phones or conversation. The magic of a darkened theater can be disrupted by the light of someone text messaging as well. Please be considerate to others and remember to turn off your cell phone for the duration of the show.



## Thank You

Playhouse Square gratefully acknowledges the people of Cuyahoga County for their historical support to theater restoration, upkeep and programming, as well as through their ongoing contributions through Cuyahoga Arts and Culture.

# APRIL/MAY AT PLAYHOUSE SQUARE

ALLEN ♦ OUTCALT/ALLEN ♦ HELEN/ALLEN ♦ HANNA ♦ KENNEDY'S ♦ MIMI OHIO ♦ CONNOR PALACE ♦ KEYBANK STATE ♦ US BANK PLAZA ♦ WESTFIELD STUDIO

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

|  |   |  |   | APRIL   |  |
|--|---|--|---|---|--|
|                  |    |                 |   |   | Flanagan's Wake<br>As You Like It<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>Bare   |
| As You Like It<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>Jo Koy<br>Bare  |    | Becoming Dr. Ruth  | As You Like It<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth   | As You Like It<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth   | Flanagan's Wake<br>As You Like It<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth   |
| 2  |   | 4  | 5   | 6   | 7  |
| Becoming Dr. Ruth  |    | Becoming Dr. Ruth  | Becoming Dr. Ruth   | Becoming Dr. Ruth   | Flanagan's Wake<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>Our Planet Live  |
| 9  |   | 11   | 12  | 13  | 14   |
| Becoming Dr. Ruth  |   | Becoming Dr. Ruth  | Becoming Dr. Ruth   | Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>By the Way, Meet<br>Vera Stark   | Flanagan's Wake<br>Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>By the Way, Meet<br>Vera Stark<br>Balanchine's<br>Serenade/Symphony<br>of Life |
| 16   | 17  | 18   | 19  | 20  | 21   |
| Becoming Dr. Ruth<br>Meet Vera Stark<br>The Musical Box  |   | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical   | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical  | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical  | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Flanagan's Wake<br>By the Way, Meet<br>Vera Stark<br>Ain't Misbehavin'             |
| 23   | 24  | 25   | 26  | 27  | 28   |
| Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Meet Vera Stark<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty | <b>MAY</b>  |  | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty                 | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty  |
| 30   | 1   | 2  | 3   | 4   | 5  |
| Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty                    |  | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty<br>The Shalva Band | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty<br>Samantha Bee | Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty<br>Menopause The<br>Musical              |
| 7  |   | 9  | 10  | 11  | 12   |
| Tina: The Tina Turner<br>Musical<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty                    |  | Dear Evan Hansen<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty   | Dear Evan Hansen<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty                 | Dear Evan Hansen<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty<br>Tom Papa                     | Dear Evan Hansen<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty  |
| 14   |   | 16   | 17  | 18  | 19   |
| Dear Evan Hansen<br>Ain't Misbehavin'<br>K. Ludwig's Moriarty                                    |   |  | Spinosaurus:<br>Lost Giant of the<br>Cretaceous,<br>Nat Geo Live!             | John Mellencamp   | John Mellencamp  |
| 21/28  | 22/29   | 23/30  | 24/31   | 25  | 26   |
|  |   |  |   |   | Cleveland Celtic<br>Ensemble   |
|  |   |  |   |   | 27   |

Shows are announced every week. Sign up at [playhousesquare.org](http://playhousesquare.org) to get advance notices by email!



# SETTING THE STAGE *for Success*

We believe that all Cleveland youth should have access to high-quality arts education. Through the generosity of our donors, we are investing to scale up neighborhood-based programs that now serve 3,000 youth year-round in music, dance, theater, photography, literary arts and curatorial mastery. ***That's setting the stage for success. Find your passion, and partner with the Cleveland Foundation to make your greatest charitable impact.***

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