

2015/16 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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Season Sponsors

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



Our Lucky Thirteenth Season proved to be an eclectic ride.

We began the new season with the Regional Premiere of the moving musical *Dogfight*, by the up-and-coming duo Pasek and Paul. A romantic and heartbreaking story about how a cruel bet leads to discovery and the power of compassion, *Dogfight* was nominated for seven San Diego Critics Circle Awards, winning as Outstanding Resident Musical. In the fall, we continued with our repertory exploration of Noël Coward's classic comedy of bad manners, *Hay Fever*, paired with the seldom-produced drama, The Vortex. This pairing gave our audiences an opportunity to discovery opposite facets of Coward's writing. We continued to polish our own musical adaptation of A Christmas Carol, introducing all new puppets built by Lynne Jennings and the San Diego Guild of Puppetry. A Christmas Carol is still a holiday tradition that continues to be a strong performer in our season. January brought us the Southern California premiere of the haunting play When the Rain Stops Falling. This new play explored the ways the sins of our past can continue to plague future generations...only confrontation, forgiveness and acceptance can allow one to break past chains and move freely into the future. In the Spring, we celebrated with a naughty and campy revival of the cult classic Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show. The interactive relationship with the audience made for a fun and singular evening. The season finished up with the San Diego premiere of Aaron Posner's Stupid F^{**king} Bird, an irreverent deconstruction of Chekov's The Seagull. Mr. Posner came out to see the performance and joined us in a discussion about creating theatre and his playwriting. He described our production as "A Revelation."

Once again, Cygnet reached new milestones with increased revenue in both contributed and earned income, completing the year with income up over 14% and in excess of 2.6 million dollars. The income growth has allowed Cygnet to expand programming and increase outreach into our community.

This year also saw significant growth in the Cygnet family. We were thrilled to begin the year with the addition of Rob Lutfy as our new Associate Artistic Director. Rob has directed for Cygnet in the past as a guest director and brings with him a fresh style and view on theatre. Rob directed When the Rain Stops Falling and Stupid F**king Bird this season. He also spearheaded the creation of our new play development program. We also hired Marinda Peugh as our new Director of Development. Coming to us with years of experience in development at The American Red Cross, Marinda is an avid lover of theatre and the arts. Marinda and Rob compliment the team nicely, and we are excited to have them on board.

All this incredible success was made possible by the dedication of our staff, the creativity of our artists and the continuing generosity and support of our donors and subscribers.

Bell Schnidt









UPLIFTING MUSICAL DOGFIGHT

The season started strong right out of the gate. *Dogfight* wowed critics and audiences alike, receiving a whopping seven Critics Circle Nominations and winning Outstanding Resident Musical. It was also hailed as one of the year's Best Resident Musicals on multiple "Best of" lists. In addition to our regular Cygneture events, we were proud to host a special pre-show Tequila Tasting night in partnership with The Tequila Factory.

"Dogfight commands attention....a must see this summer." - San Diego Union Tribune "Murray directs Dogfight with assurance, imagination, sensitivity, and flair, aided and abetted by a cast of mostly San Diego-based triple-threats, nine performers who can hold their own against any New York City cast."- StageSceneLA

PERFORMING IN REPERTORY NOEL COWARD REP

Continuing the tradition of two shows performed in rotating rep, *Hay Fever* and *The* Vortex showed audiences the light and dark of playwright Noel Coward. We were proud to receive two Critics Circle Awards nominations. We partnered with popular cabaret venue Martinis Above Fourth for a special Martini Night. Guest bartenders served up two special martinis inspired by both shows. Cygnet also partnered with Make-A-Wish San Diego. The organization promoted the rep to their supporters, and Cygnet hosted a special pass-the-hat evening, collecting over \$500 to benefit the non-profit.

HAY FEVER LIGHT AND MADCAP

"Quintessential Coward. It's a sheer delight from start to finish." - Times of San Diego

THE VORTEX DARK AND SHOCKING "So edge-of-the-seat intense...it's hard to breathe." - San Diego Union Tribune

A HOLIDAY TRADITION A CHRISTMAS CAROL

Ebenezer Scrooge and Dickens' tale of hope and redemption continued to hold steady as a holiday favorite. Our second annual family day was a big hit and included cookie decorating, a coloring station and hot chocolate for everyone! We partnered with Mission Federal Credit Union, San Diego Family Magazine, and the non-profit Special Needs Resource Foundation of San Diego. Together with Mission Federal and a pass-the-hat collection on Family Day, Cygnet Theatre donated over \$1,500 to the organization that serves special needs families throughout the county.

"Cygnet's production of 'A Christmas Carol' upholds Dickens' legacy." – Uptown News

AWARD-WINNING DRAMA WHEN THE RAIN STOPS FALLING

Dubbed "The Best New Play of the Year" in 2010 by Time Magazine, our winter production by Andrew Boyell was a catalyst for conversation for all who saw it. Taking place in London and various parts of Australia, patrons were treated to a special *Dialect Discussion* post-show forum with the show's Dialect Coach, Vanessa Dinning, which included a mini-dialect session.

"The show's cast of talented actors...keep the audiences riveted. When the Rain Stops Falling is both devastating and hopeful, a production San Diegans will be discussing for a long time to come." - Nina Garin, KPBS

"Will no doubt rank among San Diego's **best shows of 2016**," - San Diego Union-Tribune

CULT FAVORITE RICHARD O'BRIEN'S THE ROCKY HORROR SHOW

Nobody rocks fishnets and heels like Dr. Frank-n-Furter. Complete with late night showings and costume contests, audience members hooted and hollered at cast members with the help of special prop kits sold at concessions. A very tongue-incheek partnership with the San Diego Blood Bank included a pre-show blood drive which generated life-saving blood donations from cast, crew, staff and patrons that had the power to touch the lives of at least 39 people.

"Murray and his company have knocked one out of the park (and maybe clear to Frank's home planet of Transvlvania)," - San Diego Union-Tribune

HILARIOUS CONTEMPORARY REMIX **STUPID F**KING BIRD**

Cygnet closed out the season with a bang, guite literally. The "sort-of adaptation" of Anton Chekhov's The Seagul/received rave reviews, including from the playwright **himself**. Aaron Posner, who we were honored to have attend a performance. He said: "It is always delightful to see your work treated with love, respect and true talent. Seeing SFB at Cygnet was not only genuinely enjoyable but also a revelation. I learned new things about my own work from the production, which was really exciting. Robby and the entire team - actors, designers, everyone - attacked the play with intelligence, insight and a lot of f**king energy and talent. You can't really ask for anything more than that. It's a really excellent production."

"Hats off to Cygnet for raising the banner of revolution and bringing a classic into the 21st century, giving us a night to experience, not just watch." - San Diego Jewish World



















EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMS **Free In-School Workshops**

Cygnet 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 2015-16, Cygnet's 60 workshops, serving 870 students, focused on the productions of Hay Fever, The Vortex, A Christmas Carol, and Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show.

Free Student Matinees

Cygnet offers free student matinees for select mainstage productions, and in 2015-2016, 830 students attended matinees of Hay Fever, The Vortex, A Christmas Carol, and Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show. Cygnet creates study guides for students and teachers to complement the matinee experience.

Post-show forums with actors and Cygnet's dramaturg help further the students' understanding of each production. For the majority of these students, this was their first live theatre performance.

Storytelling on the Green

Six times each week, Cygnet moves outdside 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 2015-16, "Storytelling" was their first exposure to live theatre.

CYGNETURE EVENTS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Cygnet patrons return season after season for the work they see on our stage. But engaging audiences doesn't just happen during a show. This year, we continued our popular Cygneture events including Theatre on Tap, Wine Nights, Out Nights, Pre-Show Concerts, Special Tasting Nights and Family Day. We partnered with other non-profits to support a variety of causes while gaining exposure to new audiences. Partners included Make-A-Wish San Diego, San Diego Blood Bank, Special Needs Resource Foundation, and Southern Caregiver Resource Center. Corporate and Business partners included San Diego Family Magazine, Mission Federal Credit Union, Martinis Above Fourth, and the Tequila Factory.

THE BILL AND JUDY GARRETT FINISH LINE COMMISSION

This new program awards a financial grant to two playwrights, one national and one local, to commission them to complete a work that has been in their "yet to be finished" pile. In addition to the grant to finish the play, they will be working with directors and actors in

table workshops culminating with a public performance. Through the reading before an audience, the playwrights can assess the final project and how it is received.

CYGNET SERVES

Recognizing the importance of serving San Diego's vast military community, Cygnet took large strides in Season XIII to introduce programs that would support those who serve our country abroad as well as on the homefront. After becoming a Blue Star Theatre in February 2015 and introducing Seats for Soldiers (now Tickets for Troops) in September 2015, Cygnet received an Exploring Engagement Grant from the James Irvine Foundation in December 2015 that helped launch a new, comprehensive military outreach initiative.

Blue Star Theatre

As a Blue Star Theatre, in collaboration with the Theatre Communications Group and Blue Star Families, with leadership support from the MetLife Foundation, Cygnet now offers deeply discounted \$20 tickets to military personnel, veterans, and their families.

Tickets For Troops

Partnering with local military organizations, Cygnet invited patrons to subsidize heavily discounted tickets so that enlisted military, veterans, and their families could attend our 2015 production of A Christmas Carol free of charge. Thanks to this program, nearly 400 tickets were distributed through the United Services Organization, Operation Homefront, and the Armed Services YMCA.

Workshops & Community Performances

Beginning with a comprehensive needs assessment, Cygnet's Education and Outreach team met with numerous military community leaders and organizations to begin designing workshops and performances that would serve their needs. By the end of the 2015-2016 season, partnerships were confirmed with more than 10 organizations with plans to begin conducting workshops and performances within the first month of the new 2016-2017 season.

EMERGING ARTISTS

Cygnet Theatre collaborates with San Diego State University to provide Lipinsky Family Fellowships for specially selected San Diego State University graduate students. In Season XIII, eight Fellows worked with designers on sets, sound, lights or costumes for Cygnet under the mentorship of Artistic Director Sean Murray. Cygnet also provides professional directing and acting

opportunities for select recent theatre school graduates, often offering them their first Actors' Equity contract, helping launch their professional career. In 2015-2016, Cygnet provided three opportunities to these emerging artists. Since this program began, several artists have appeared on and off Broadway and others have returned to Cygnet, including Cygnet's Associate Artistic Director, Rob Lutfy.





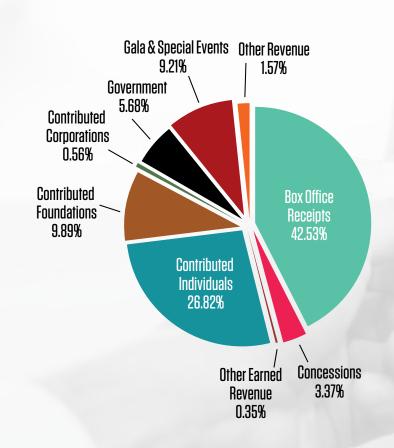
Emerging Artists Patrick Osteen and Alex Hoeffler



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.

REVENUE

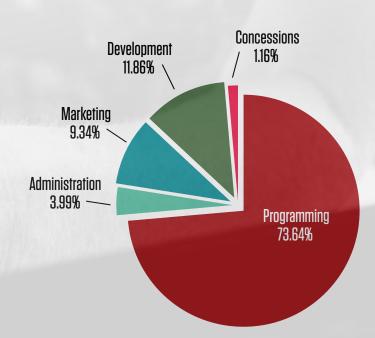
TOTAL	\$2,642,537
GALA AND SPECIAL EVENTS	\$243,344
GOVERNMENT	\$150,237
CONTRIBUTED - CORPORATIONS	\$14,840
CONTRIBUTED - FOUNDATIONS	\$261,450
CONTRIBUTED - INDIVIDUALS	\$708,713
OTHER EARNED REVENUE	\$9,211
CONCESSIONS	\$89,157
BOX OFFICE RECEIPTS	\$1,123,935



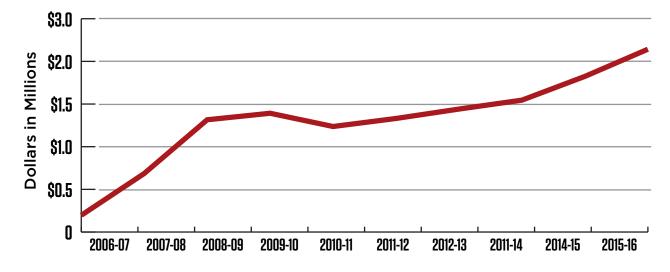
Cygnet has experienced notable growth over the past 13 years. The largest increase came in the three years leading up to our move to Old Town and during our first year producing in Old Town. Once established in Old Town and during the early years of the great recession, growth was more modest. This past season we had revenue growth of \$318K, a 13.70% increase over the prior year.

EXPENSE

TOTAL	\$2,676,899
CONCESSIONS	\$31,100
DEVELOPMENT	\$317,545
MARKETING	\$250,008
ADMINISTRATION	\$106,917
PROGRAMMING	\$1,971,329



10-YEAR REVENUE GROWTH





Executive Director Bill Schmidt, Associate Artistic Director Robby Lutfy and Artistic Director Sean Murray.

CYGNET PLANNED GIVING SOCIETY

Cygnet is honored to recognize our Planned Giving Society members for their commitment to provide valuable resources to help ensure the future vitality and long-term stability of Cygnet Theatre.

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*In Memoriam

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* Gifts given through Funds at the Jewish Community Foundation

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This listing reflects gifts made from July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016.

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Theatre - 4040 Twiggs Street, San Diego, CA 92110 | Office - 2410 Congress Street, San Diego, CA 92110 Box Office - 619-337-1525 | Office - 619-574-0059 Tax ID # 57-1146474

