

PHOENICIA PLAYHOUSE



ANNUAL REPORT
Fiscal Year 2020-2021

February 2022

Dear Friends of the Phoenicia Playhouse,

There was a magical moment in Phoenicia last June when a Stage Manager stood on the new porch of the Phoenicia Playhouse and described the wonderfully special day-to-day aspects of life in the small town of about 3,000 people that surrounded him.

“Nice town, y'know what I mean?” he observed.

What made the moment so moving was that the line was delivered by an actor playing the role of Stage Manager in Thornton Wilder’s “Our Town” before a sold-out outdoor audience composed mostly of our local townspeople. As the sun set over Church Street in Phoenicia on that hot summer evening, there was a recognition that the ties binding together Wilder’s fictional community were very much like those that unite us everyday here in our town.



At the Phoenicia Playhouse, we’ve been working hard during these difficult times to produce events that entertain and draw our community closer. We are grateful for your support.

This report provides an update on key aspects of the Phoenicia Playhouse’s activities and business. It is long overdue, delayed in large part by the challenges of the COVID pandemic. As we continue to contemplate and plan an exciting future for the Playhouse, we think it important that our supporters and our community know and understand what we’ve been doing as an organization and where we aim to go. We invite you to read on, ask questions, donate, volunteer, and help us on the journey.

Sincerely,

Michael Cioffi
President of the Board of Directors
Phoenicia Playhouse

Our Mission

One of the most wonderful aspects of theater is that it reminds us that we are not alone.

That's been especially true for about two years now, as theaters all around the world have grappled with the ramifications of the COVID pandemic. The challenge is complex: How do theaters respond to the needs of their local communities at a time when theater supporters are understandably concerned about their own health and that of their families and friends? How does a local theater respect the need for distancing while letting members of the community know that they're *not* alone?

At the Phoenicia Playhouse, we've responded with a mix of outdoor events and online video performances.

The summer of 2021, for example, was highlighted by two enormously successful events on the Playhouse's new front porch. In June, Playhouse Artistic Director Michael Koegel directed an outstanding cast of actors in a performance of Thornton Wilder's "Our Town," using the porch and front yard as a stage. The audience sat on chairs on Church Street, which was closed off to traffic. (Thanks for your help, Shandaken Police Department!). The show sold out nearly every evening; we even added an extra performance.



In August, the Playhouse featured a weekend workshop and evening of storytelling hosted by Matthew Dicks, who has earned accolades as a 53-time Moth StorySLAM champion and 7-time Moth GrandSLAM champion. The show featured personal stories - some touching, others hilarious - from a number of local residents. It attracted a new group of performers and a new audience for the Playhouse.

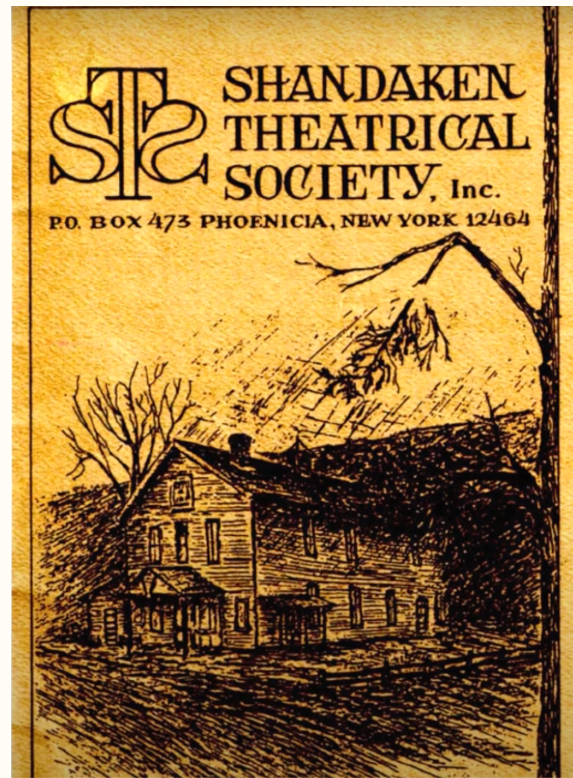
And when challenged by the safety restrictions related to COVID, we turned to ZOOM to help reach our Phoenicia audience. For the year-end holiday season in 2020, Michael Koegel directed a reading of Frank Capra's "It's a Wonderful Life," which was a much needed tonic for actors and audiences alike heading into the first winter of the pandemic; a year later, a reading of "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" helped us mark the 2021 holiday season. In between those shows, the Playhouse featured a reading of an original play by our own Board Member Ovi Vargas entitled "Roamin' Catholic" and a reading of Oscar Wilde's comedy "The Importance of Being Earnest."

As we look toward the 2022 season, we're hoping to be able to offer at least one show inside the Playhouse theater this Spring. We're in the early stages of developing a summer theater program for children, funded by a bequest from Reel Teens founder Barry Kerr. In all of this, of course, we will be following the guidance of health authorities regarding COVID safety measures.

Our Building

Did you know that the Phoenicia Playhouse building was erected in 1887 by the International Order of Odd Fellows? Over the years the building has housed an auction house and a movie theater and served as the home of the Shandaken Theatrical Society.

Several years ago, we embarked on an ambitious strategic plan to make critical facilities improvements to our 1880s theater, create a community gathering space, and aim to have a weekly production or event in the Playhouse within a five-year time frame. Our new wrap-around porch was completed in 2020 after six months of construction, at a cost of approximately \$100,000, and is the first phase of that multi-phase renovation campaign. We want to extend our heartfelt thanks for the generous support we've received from New York State grants, Ulster Savings Bank, local businesses and our loyal patrons for making this possible. While the COVID pandemic has forced us to delay additional elements of the long-term plan, we remain committed to its larger objectives.



On a day-to-day level, a burst pipe during the winter of 2021 required some interior repairs, including rebuilding the walls in the theater's entrance vestibule and the back wall of the theater. We added some new lighting to the theater ceiling and in the vestibule. We've also taken this time during the pandemic to upgrade some of our stage lighting, removing some older fixtures and replacing them with newer models, which will improve our lighting capabilities. Along with the new lights, we upgraded our Lighting Control Board and purchased a new Soundboard. This equipment will allow better, and simpler, control and performance of lighting and sound so critical to good production standards.

Our Finances

While the pandemic has presented challenges for the Playhouse's finances, we believe we've managed well. In our 2020-21 fiscal year, for example, Playhouse total revenue increased 24% over the prior year, thanks in large part to a heartening 55% increase in donations from supporters like you. At the same time, total expenses were 46% lower than the prior fiscal year. This careful balancing has enabled us to maintain and make improvements to our historic theater building, mount in-person and video productions, and maintain a modest cash balance in our bank account. A summary financial statement for our last three fiscal years is included at the end of this report.

Our Organizational Structure

The Playhouse board has been discussing how our organization is legally structured and how we might improve that structure to better serve our community. Historically, the Phoenicia Playhouse (originally known as the Shandaken Theatrical Society) has been a “membership” organization, where members are anyone who donates money to the organization. Many experts in nonprofit governance believe that model is inefficient and doesn't serve the long-term interests of members or the community. The board has been seeking advice regarding possible alternative approaches and expects to share more thoughts on this issue soon.

Our Future

We're excited about the future of the Phoenicia Playhouse. We hope you are too.

Our long-term vision for the Playhouse is of a place that plays an increasingly important role in our community with a robust schedule of events that spans theater, music, film and performances of all sorts for a wide variety of audiences. We believe it's critically important to expand our audience, increase community engagement and identify opportunities for our theater to be part of Phoenicia's continuing renaissance.

As the Playhouse hopefully returns soon to a more robust schedule of in-person performances, we need volunteers to help us maintain and grow a vibrant performance space in our community. In addition to performers, we're actively recruiting volunteers to help design and build sets, run lights and sound during performances, assist in marketing and communications, help run our box office, manage concessions and a host of other critical tasks. If you're interested in working with us, please email us at membership@phoeniciaplayhouse.com.

To accomplish all our plans, the Playhouse also needs the continued financial support of our community. These are difficult times for many, which is one reason a vibrant local theater like the Playhouse is so important. If you're in a position to make a contribution towards the future of the Phoenicia Playhouse, you can do so at phoeniciaplayhouse.com by clicking on the Donate Now button.



Thank you for your time, your attention and your support of the Phoenicia Playhouse. We look forward to sharing more information with you as we move ahead in 2022.

The Shandaken Theatrical Society
Phoenicia Playhouse
Financial Statement for FY 18-19, FY 19-20, FY 20-21

	FY 18-19	FY 19-20	FY 20-21
INCOME STATEMENT			
Contributions, Gifts, Grants	\$ 17,771	\$ 42,102	\$ 65,076
Program Service Revenue	\$ 60,323	\$ 31,750	\$ 14,669
Investment Revenue	\$ 99	\$ 86	\$ 46
Insurance Reimbursement	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 12,000</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 78,193	\$ 73,938	\$ 91,791
Salaries	\$ 37,790	\$ 6,336	\$ 0
Prof Fees/Contractors	\$ 9,261	\$ 9,041	\$ 1,865
Occupancy/Rent/Utilities/Maintenance	\$ 14,410	\$ 8,924	\$ 9,289
Other Expenses	<u>\$ 47,079</u>	<u>\$ 15,410</u>	<u>\$ 10,415</u>
Total Expenses	\$ 108,540	\$ 39,711	\$ 21,569
Excess/(Deficit)	\$ (30,347)	\$ 34,227	\$ 70,222
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	\$ 183,321	\$ 152,974	\$ 187,201
Other Changes	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>	<u>\$ 0</u>
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 152,974	\$ 187,201	\$ 257,423
BALANCE SHEET			
Cash, Savings, Investments	\$ 57,361	\$ 82,742	\$ 49,115
Building, Equipment	<u>\$ 95,613</u>	<u>\$ 104,459</u>	<u>\$ 208,308</u>
Total Assets	\$ 152,974	\$ 187,201	\$ 257,423
Total Liabilities	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Net Assets or Fund Balances	\$ 152,974	\$ 187,201	\$ 257,423

**The Phoenicia Playhouse
Board of Directors**



Michael Cioffi (President)
Allen Vella (Secretary)
Suzanne Frank (Treasurer)
Michael Koegel (Artistic Director)
Mary Bosakowski
Larry Cianfoni
Michael Connor
George Muller
Rob Stanley
Ovi Vargas