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# PHOENIX THEATRE

COMPREHENSIVE  
CAMPAIGN

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**ON THE STAGE IT IS ALWAYS NOW; THE PERSONAGES ARE STANDING ON THAT RAZOR EDGE, BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE FUTURE, WHICH IS THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF CONSCIOUS BEING; THE WORDS ARE RISING TO THEIR LIPS IN IMMEDIATE SPONTANEITY** • Thornton Wilder, playwright

More than any other art form, live theater creates an authentic set of moments in which we can watch people change, worlds intersect, and possibilities play out before our eyes and ears. In a theater audience, we witness an experience created for us alone.

Even as it entertains us, theater can show us circumstances and ideas that prompt us to think about our lives and even reconsider our attitudes and beliefs. The playwright Bertolt Brecht believed that “Our theater must stimulate a desire for understanding, a delight in changing reality.... Theater must teach all the pleasures and joys of discovery, all the feelings of triumph associated with liberation.” In Indianapolis, the Phoenix Theatre “entertains by presenting the best of professional, contemporary theater in an intimate setting. Engaging our community, patrons, and staff with issue-oriented plays, the Phoenix enlightens audiences about social concerns while challenging them to re-examine their roles in society.”

Often the first Midwest theater to stage a recent Broadway hit, the Phoenix is an Actors' Equity member institution whose diverse productions feature professionals on and off stage. The Phoenix presents new works by Indiana playwrights, offers acting and playwriting classes in the community, and works to make theater accessible to all Hoosiers. But as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit enterprise, the Phoenix Theatre depends on contributions as well as ticket sales to help it thrive and sustain its mission. *Now the Phoenix has embarked on a fundraising campaign designed to rejuvenate its facility and support its ongoing contributions to Indiana's cultural stature.*



## THERE IS A HUNGER TO SEE THE HUMAN PRESENCE ACTED OUT. AS LONG AS THAT NEED REMAINS, PEOPLE WILL FIND A WAY TO DO THEATER • **Zelda Fichandler, director**

In 1983, a group of theater artists founded the Phoenix Theatre as a contemporary company dedicated to diversity and excellence in every aspect of its productions. Led by Bryan Fonseca, these founders saw few local options for playwrights to explore contemporary issues in a venue capable of engaging the community. They conceived their new not-for-profit theater as an answer to that need.

Originally located in the Ambassador Building near the Central Library, the Phoenix found its current home at 749 North Park Avenue in the Chatham Arch neighborhood when devoted patron J. Scott Keller purchased the abandoned First United Brethren Church building and donated it to the company. After renovations, the facility opened in 1988 and won an Adaptive Use Award from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. The building houses the 130-seat Mainstage and 75-seat Frank & Katrina Basile Theatre, as well as administrative offices.

In 1993, the Phoenix joined the Actors' Equity Association. Founded in 1913 in response to industry abuses, this professional stage actors' and managers' union has grown into a 35,000-member national association. The Phoenix is one of only four Equity theaters in Central Indiana and the state's sole professional theater devoted to contemporary work. Its Equity status underlines its commitment to the highest artistic standards.



## I BELIEVE THAT IN A GREAT CITY, OR EVEN IN A SMALL CITY OR A VILLAGE, A GREAT THEATER IS THE OUTWARD AND VISIBLE SIGN OF AN INWARD AND PROBABLE CULTURE • Laurence Olivier, actor

From 1983 to 2006, the Phoenix Theatre produced more than 250 plays (including nearly 70 world premieres), as well as short plays, staged readings, musical events, and performance art. Nearly 20,000 audience members attend the Phoenix's annual subscription series of up to 12 shows.

The Phoenix reaches out to its community with free previews, discounted CheapSeats performances, and deep ticket discounts for young adults up to age 24. It upholds a unique commitment to unheard voices, producing works by and about African-Americans, Hispanics/Latinos, gays and lesbians, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans.

The theater's issue-oriented plays challenge audiences to re-examine societal roles. Recent productions have addressed medical ethics, eating disorders, domestic violence, mental and terminal illnesses, and the criminal justice system. In the free post-show discussion series *AfterWords*, subject-matter experts delve deeper into the issues raised on stage.

The Phoenix offers adult classes in acting, audition techniques, musical theater, and playwriting, and professional internships in technical theater and arts administration. Recent interns have come from Indiana University, Wabash College, Franklin College, and the University of Michigan.

Since 1988, the Phoenix has been a leader in revitalizing the Mass Ave District of downtown Indianapolis. It attracts 12 percent of its patrons from outside Central Indiana and brings many suburbanites to the District. Each season, it employs more than 150 actors, directors, designers, theater technicians, and administrators, boosting the arts in Indianapolis.

The Phoenix partners with Illinois and Ohio theaters, including The Human Race (Dayton), Victory Gardens (Chicago), and the Chicago Theatre Company. It is a member of the Indiana Theatre Alliance, League of Indianapolis Theatres, and National New Play Network (NNPN), an alliance of 25 not-for-profit professional theaters that commission and produce new plays to foster the American theater.



## FOR A MINUTE OR PERHAPS TWO—AND THIS IS A LONG TIME—THE THEATER MAKES MAN BETTER AND HAPPIER ON THIS EARTH • *Jean Jacques Gautier, critic*

The Phoenix Theatre earns continuing recognition for its high-quality productions of diverse, innovative works. As a result, it receives invitations to perform in cities across the United States and abroad, including at Ireland's Dundalk International Maytime Festival. Its productions attract theatergoers from and beyond Indianapolis, including patrons from a record 85 cities for one production during the 2000-2001 season. Favorable local and regional reviews reflect the theater's high profile in—and beyond—the Midwestern arts landscape.

*The Phoenix Theatre is one of the major cultural attractions in Indianapolis. Local alterative types, yuppies and hipsters all flock to a trendy little theater with a growing subscriber base and a hard-won national reputation for new works and savvy programming.*

—Chris Jones • *The Chicago Tribune*

*This is why we go to the theatre. It doesn't get much better than this.*

—Marion Garmel • *Indianapolis Star*

*A motto is inscribed above the Phoenix box office that says "Many Voices, One Theatre." Under Bryan Fonseca's direction, the theatre has remained true to this principle.*

—David Hoppe • *Nuvo Newsweekly*

*At the Phoenix, Artistic Director Bryan Fonseca concentrates on local and regional premieres of material that is fascinating and often challenging.*

—Tom McElfresh • *Cincinnati CityBeat*



**IN A PLAY...A PSYCHOLOGICAL LOOP IS ESTABLISHED BETWEEN PERFORMERS AND AUDIENCE. NOTHING LIKE THIS CAN OCCUR IN A MOVIE THEATER. OCCASIONALLY, MOVIE AUDIENCES APPLAUD OR HISS OR WALK OUT, BUT FOR THE MOST PART THEY ARE PASSIVE. NO SOCIAL BOND BETWEEN THE AUDIENCE AND THE ACTORS CAN EXIST** • O.B. Hardison, critic

The Phoenix Theatre's staff and operations deliberately remain small and frugal. Making live theater financially accessible to the widest possible audience ranks among its founders' commitments, and motivates its free previews, CheapSeats performances, half-price tickets for youth up to age 24, and free post-performance discussions.

The Phoenix's ticket sales provide only approximately 50 percent of its budget. Corporate, individual, and foundation support comprise the balance of the theater's annual operating budget.

Thirty percent of the theater's contributed income derives from individual donors. An additional 30 percent comes from tax dollars through the Arts Council of Indianapolis, the Indiana Arts Commission, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Corporate, foundation, and in-

kind support provide the remainder of the contributed income. The Phoenix's strongest supporters include the Central Indiana Community Foundation, the Christel DeHaan Family Foundation, Creative Street Media Group, and the Schubert Foundation.





WHAT WE NEED

## WITHOUT AN AUDIENCE THERE IS NO THEATER. THEY MAKE THE PERFORMANCE MEANINGFUL • Viola Spolin, director

The Phoenix Theatre's fundraising campaign targets three areas of need. First, the theater's physical plant requires renovations, updates, and repairs. New programming and ongoing administrative objectives make up the second campaign component. Third, the theater seeks to expand its existing \$265,000 endowment.

**PHYSICAL PLANT** • In Indianapolis, the Phoenix is one of only four producing theaters that own their own facilities. Theatrical production places unique demands on the Phoenix's building and its subsystems, including constant on-stage reconfiguration; wiring, lighting, and sound-reproduction equipment to support higher loads and meet greater demands than other uses of the space would require; facilities to accommodate visitors who arrive and depart en masse; multiple performance spaces; and administrative offices, a workshop, and storage.

**OPERATIONAL SUPPORT** • The Phoenix has produced relevant contemporary theater and educational outreach for more than two decades. To stay competitive, the theater must continue to create and support innovative programs, attract and retain the best personnel, and invest in initiatives that will keep the organization stable.

**ENDOWMENT** • Keeping a cultural institution alive and vibrant into its third decade requires a solid financial base. Enhancing its existing endowment will provide the Phoenix Theatre with a safety net against economic adversity.





# THE STAGE ACTOR ESTABLISHES BETWEEN HIMSELF AND HIS AUDIENCE A CONTACT REAL AS ELECTRICITY • Eric Bentley, critic

OUR PROJECT BUDGET

## PHYSICAL PLANT

<b>EXTERIOR</b>	Repair main entrance roof; replace steel beam across entrance . . . .	7,500
	Repair all doors . . . . .	2,500
	Repair front and side steps . . . . .	8,000
	Replace roof . . . . .	30,000
	Paint exterior . . . . .	3,000
	Awnings . . . . .	7,500
	Landscaping . . . . .	5,000
	Tuck pointing/cement repair . . . . .	4,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$67,500</b>	

<b>MAINSTAGE</b>	Raise floor in front of house; raise door frames . . . . .	2,500
	Carpet front of house and lobby . . . . .	3,500
	Repair walls from water damage; paint . . . .	5,000
	Repair brick and plaster (stage left) . . . . .	1,500
	Repair windows onstage and in house . . . .	1,500
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	

<b>LOBBY</b>	Repaint, repair . . . . .	15,000
	Lobby restrooms . . . . .	10,000
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>

<b>STAGE ELECTRICAL/EQUIPMENT</b>	Install 200-amp disconnect, 42-space main lug panel, feeds in dimmer packs, branch circuits . . . . .	5,000
	Dimmer board . . . . .	2,000
	Lighting instruments . . . . .	75,000
	Tools . . . . .	10,000
	Washer/dryer . . . . .	1,000
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$93,000</b>

<b>PLUMBING</b>	Repair men's room vent/trap; install hot water service to kitchen . . . . .	2,500
	Repair main water line/odor . . . . .	2,500
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>

<b>HVAC</b>	Remove old/install new equipment . . . . .	50,000
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$50,000</b>

<b>OFFICES</b>	Carpet . . . . .	4,000
	Phone system . . . . .	2,000
	Copier . . . . .	4,000
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>

**PHYSICAL PLANT TOTAL** . . . . . \$264,500

## OPERATIONAL SUPPORT/ENDOWMENT

### OPERATIONAL SUPPORT

New program initiatives . . . . .	100,000
Administrative initiatives . . . . .	200,000

### ORGANIZATIONAL STABILITY

Pension program . . . . .	100,000
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### ENDOWMENT SUPPORT

Feasibility study . . . . .	15,000
Campaign costs . . . . .	50,500
Endowment funds . . . . .	770,000

### OPERATIONAL SUPPORT/ ENDOWMENT TOTAL

. . . . . \$1,235,500

**GRAND TOTAL** . . . . . **\$1,500,000**



WHY SUPPORT THE PHOENIX

**EVERY NOW AND THEN, WHEN YOU'RE ON STAGE, YOU HEAR THE BEST SOUND A PLAYER CAN HEAR. IT'S A SOUND YOU CAN'T GET IN MOVIES OR IN TELEVISION. IT IS THE SOUND OF A WONDERFUL, DEEP SILENCE THAT MEANS YOU'VE HIT THEM WHERE THEY LIVE** • *Shelley Winters, actor*

The Phoenix Theatre is unique to Indianapolis—and unique *in* Indianapolis. An artistic home to more than 130 artists each year, we are proud of our focus on thought-provoking, challenging plays. We often stage Indiana's, the Midwest's, and even the world's initial performance of new, important theatrical works. We provide a forum for playwrights and the community to articulate and explore their views of the world.

On a practical note, our administrative staff aggregates 50 years' experience in guiding not-for-profit enterprises. We stage our plans for manageable growth at a realistic, sustainable pace. Our internal culture—professional yet welcoming—produces an enjoyable working atmosphere, enabling us to attract high-quality talent to our professional productions. And because the terms of our Small Professional Theatre (SPT) agreement with Actors' Equity allow

non-members to perform on our stages, we provide an outlet for upcoming talent to reach fully professional status.

Indianapolis and Central Indiana deserve the authentic cultural voice that the Phoenix Theatre provides. Through your support of our capital and endowment fundraising campaign, you join with our founders and patrons to invest in cultural excellence.



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# PHOENIX THEATRE

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