



# CONNECTICUT CRITICS CIRCLE AWARDS

Monday, June 23 2025

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33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

# CONNECTICUT CRITICS CIRCLE AWARDS

EVENT CENTER  
HOUSATONIC COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
MONDAY, JUNE 23 2025

## ***PRESENTERS***

**NANCY SASSO JANIS** *CT CRITICS CIRCLE*

**TIM LEININGER** *CT CRITICS CIRCLE*

**KAREN ISAACS** *CT CRITICS CIRCLE*

• • • • •

## **SPECIAL AWARD**

*presented to*  
SEMINA DE LAURENTIS

*introduced by*  
Constantine Pappas

## **THE TOM KILLEN AWARD**

*presented to*  
LAUREN YARGER

*introduced by*  
Kimberly Hill

## Outstanding Costume Design

**Fabian Fidel Aguilar**  
**Stephanie Bahniuk**  
**Rea J. Brown**  
**Anlin Dauber**  
**Arthur Wilson**

Romeo & Juliet  
Ragtime  
El Coquí Espectacular  
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  
Notes on a Killing Seven Oversight...  
Hartford Stage  
Goodspeed Musicals  
Long Wharf Theatre  
Hartford Stage  
Yale Repertory Theatre

## Outstanding Lighting Design

**Evan C. Anderson**  
**Jamie Burnett**  
**Dan Kotlowitz**  
**Sherrice Mojgani**  
**Charlie Morrison**

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  
Dracula  
Romeo & Juliet  
Fever Dreams  
Fiddler on the Roof  
Hartford Stage  
Legacy Theatre  
Hartford Stage  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
ACT of CT

## Outstanding Set Design

**Luke Cantarella**  
**Luke Cantarella**  
**Johann Fitzpatrick**  
**Starlet Jacobs**  
**Anna Louizos**

Fever Dreams  
King James  
The Shark is Broken  
Tea at Five  
Native Gardens  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
Playhouse on Park  
Ivoryton Playhouse  
Westport Country Playhouse

## Outstanding Sound Design

**Jay Hilton**  
**Lindsay Jones**  
**Ryan Rumery**  
**Jane Shaw**  
**Jane Shaw**

Ragtime  
Fever Dreams  
The 39 Steps  
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  
2.5 Minute Ride  
Goodspeed Musicals  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
Westport Country Playhouse  
Hartford Stage  
Hartford Stage

## Outstanding Projections

**John Horzen**  
**Doaa Ouf**  
**Camilla Tassi**  
**Camilla Tassi**  
**Hannah Tran**

El Coquí Espectacular  
Notes on a Killing Seven Oversight...  
Sandra  
Fiddler on the Roof  
Unbecoming Tragedy  
Long Wharf Theatre  
Yale Repertory Theatre  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
ACT of CT  
Long Wharf Theatre

### Outstanding Featured Actor in a Play

<b>Ricardo Chavira</b>	Primary Trust	TheaterWorks Hartford
<b>Jimmy Johansmeyer</b>	Dracula	Legacy Theatre
<b>Russell G. Jones</b>	Eden	Yale Repertory Theatre
<b>Constantine Pappas</b>	Master Class	Music Theatre of CT
<b>Samuel Stricklen</b>	Primary Trust	TheaterWorks Hartford

### Outstanding Featured Actress in a Play

<b>Maggie Bofill</b>	Laughs in Spanish	Hartford Stage
<b>Erin Noel Grennan</b>	Theatre People	Westport Country Playhouse
<b>Mia Pinero</b>	Theatre People	Westport Country Playhouse
<b>Christina Acosta Robinson</b>	Eden	Yale Repertory Theatre
<b>Hilary Ward</b>	Primary Trust	TheaterWorks Hartford

### Outstanding Featured Actor in a Musical

<b>Jordan Friend</b>	Rock of Ages	Sharon Playhouse
<b>David R. Gordon</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Behr Marshall</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Felix Torrez-Ponce</b>	She Loves Me	Long Wharf Theatre
<b>Wes Williams</b>	Maggie	Goodspeed Musicals

### Outstanding Featured Actress in a Musical

<b>Joan Almedilla</b>	South Pacific	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Kirsti Carnahan</b>	White Christmas	Music Theatre of CT
<b>Blair Goldberg</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Brennyn Lark</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Rashidra Scott</b>	A Christmas Story	Goodspeed Musicals

### Outstanding Actor in a Play

<b>Niall Cunningham</b>	Romeo & Juliet	Hartford Stage
<b>Nathan Darrow</b>	Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	Hartford Stage
<b>Jon-Michael Reese</b>	Jimmy & Lorraine	Heartbeat Ensemble
<b>Godfrey L. Simmons Jr.</b>	Two Trains Running	Hartford Stage
<b>Justin Weaks</b>	Primary Trust	TheaterWorks Hartford

## SPECIAL AWARD

presented to

# SEMINA DE LAURENTIS

introduced by

Constantine Pappas

**Semina De Laurentis** was born and raised in Waterbury. Prior to returning to Waterbury in 1990, her career spanned solo concert work on cruises around the world and cabaret performances in NY, receiving the Manhattan Association of Cabarets Award.

In theatre, she was cast in NY and regional theaters such as The Public, Al Carmines Judson Memorial, Charles Playhouse, Washington's Arena Stage, Goodspeed, Sacramento Music, LA Theatre Works, receiving a Los Angeles Drama-Logue Award.



She was cast as the Bride of Frankenstein in the Off-Broadway production of *Have I got a Girl for You: The Frankenstein Musical* which led to being cast in *Nunsense*, originating the role of Sr. Mary Amnesia for which she received the New York Outer Critics Circle Award and honored with a NY Times Hirschfeld.

Semina filmed *Nunsense*, *Nunsense II* and *Nuncrackers* with Rue McClanahan.

Semina appeared on television in guest roles on such shows as *Baby Boom*, *LA Law*, *Growing Pains*, and assisted Dan Lauria (*The Wonder Years*) on four theatrical projects for Patchett-Kaufman Entertainment.

The L.A. writers' strike brought Semina home to Waterbury where the seed of Seven Angels Theatre was planted. Participating in a study regarding Waterbury's cultural potential, she set out to answer the question if Waterbury could support a professional theatre. As a test, Semina called friends and produced a production of *Nunsense*. The City was thrilled. With the question raised, 'what next?', she convinced 6 people to take on the challenge of founding an equity non-profit theatre in Waterbury. In 1990 Seven Angels Theatre was born.

Committed to the community, Seven Angels immediately began to have an impact, establishing a host of community and educational programs, in addition to producing professional plays and musicals of new and established works.

Over the years Seven Angels and Semina have been honored with numerous State and Community Awards including CT Critics Circle Awards (two for Best Direction of a Musical and the Tom Killain Award).

"There is a line in *SISTER ACT* - 'God sent you here for a reason. Take the hint'. 35 years ago I took the hint and never looked back. I am grateful"

### Outstanding Actress in a Play

<b>Carmen Berkeley</b>	Romeo & Juliet	Hartford Stage
<b>Vanessa R. Butler</b>	Jimmy & Lorraine	Heartbeat Ensemble
<b>Irene Glezos</b>	Master Class	Music Theatre of CT
<b>Jacqueline Hubbard</b>	Alabama Story	Ivoryton Playhouse
<b>Stephanie Machado</b>	Laughs in Spanish	Hartford Stage
<b>Samora la Perdida</b>	Notes on a Killing Seven Oversight...	Yale Repertory Theatre

### Outstanding Actor in a Musical

<b>Scott Mikita</b>	La Cage Aux Folles	Music Theatre of CT
<b>Gian Raffaele DiCostanzo</b>	Jersey Boys	ACT of CT
<b>Danny Rothman</b>	Fiddler on the Roof	ACT of CT
<b>John Scherer</b>	The Prom	Sharon Playhouse
<b>Michael Wordly</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals

### Outstanding Actress in a Musical

<b>Kate Baldwin</b>	The Prom	Sharon Playhouse
<b>Christine Dwyer</b>	Maggie	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Mamie Parris</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Emily Grace Tucker</b>	Mary Poppins	S.T.O.N.C.
<b>Danielle Wade</b>	South Pacific	Goodspeed Musicals

### Outstanding Ensemble

<b>The 39 Steps</b>	Westport Country Playhouse
<b>Fever Dreams</b>	TheaterWorks Hartford
<b>Native Gardens</b>	Westport Country Playhouse
<b>The Shark is Broken</b>	Playhouse on Park
<b>Steel Magnolias</b>	Sharon Playhouse

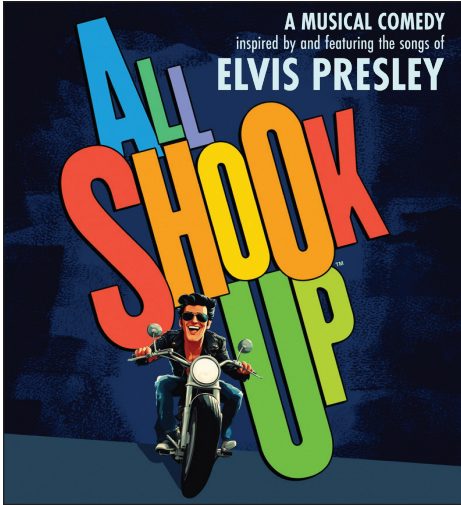
### Outstanding Choreography

<b>Josh Assor</b>	Fiddler on the Roof	ACT of CT
<b>Mallory Davis</b>	White Christmas	Music Theatre of CT
<b>Sara Edwards</b>	Ragtime	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Mara Newbery Greer</b>	A Christmas Story	Goodspeed Musicals
<b>Krystyna Resavy</b>	The Prom	Sharon Playhouse

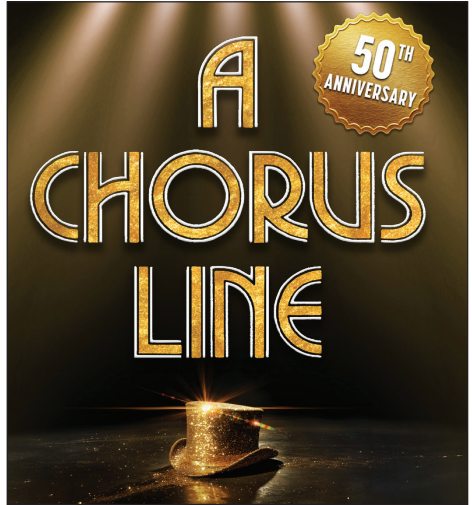
### Outstanding Solo Performance

<b>Felicia Curry</b>	Sandra	TheaterWorks Hartford
<b>Lena Kaminsky</b>	2.5 Minute Ride	Hartford Stage
<b>Carlyn Connolly</b>	Tea at Five	Ivoryton Playhouse
<b>Terrence Riggins</b>	Unbecoming Tragedy	Long Wharf Theatre

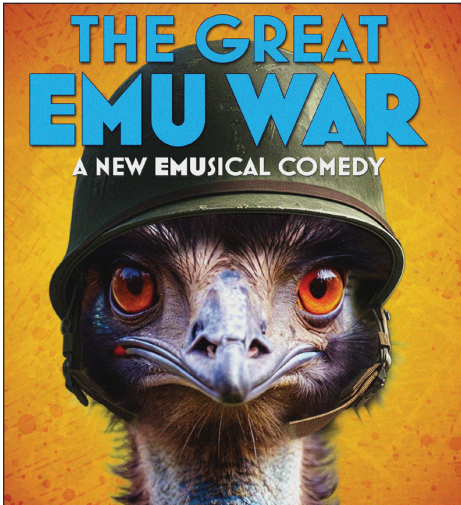
# GOODSPEED MUSICALS



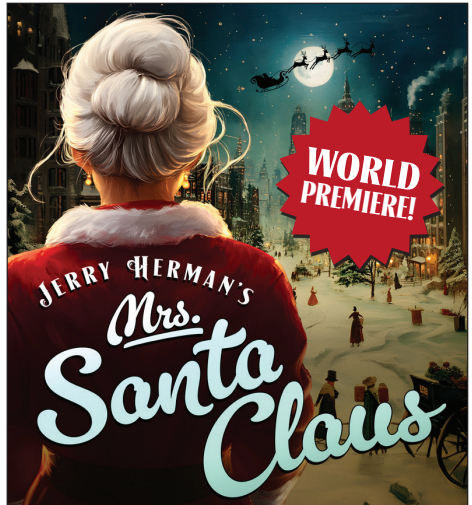
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## THE TOM KILLEN AWARD

# LAUREN YARGER

**Lauren Yarger** is a producer, playwright and theater critic. She has written several dinner theaters and revues as well as the book for an award-winning musical version of A Christmas Carol and is a member of the Dramatists Guild.

At Gracewell Productions, she produced a successful play-reading series at Connecticut's Palace Theater for four years and also produced a summer reading series by and for the Boomer Generation at Ivoryton Playhouse. Look for announcements about these and upcoming play series produced by Gracewell in Connecticut soon.



Yarger is a Co-Founder and President of the newly formed CT Theater Women Network, Inc., which will launch in July 2025 and was a Co-Founder of the CT Chapter of the League of Professional Theatre Women for nine years.

She produced this year's first "Celebrate!" Events including The CT Theater Women Awards and the Women Playwrights Festival, which will be presented again by The CT Theater Women Network in March 2027.

As a critic covering New York and Connecticut theater, she is a member of the Outer Critics Circle (Executive Producer of the annual awards in New York) and former vice president of the Drama Desk. In Connecticut she covered theater for BroadwayWorld.com, CurtainUp.com and the Manchester Journal-Inquirer. She worked at The Bushnell, The Hartford Symphony Orchestra and was Executive Director of Masterwork Productions, Inc.

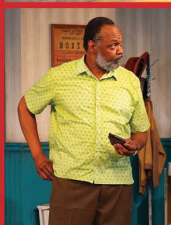
She is a Member of Theater Resources Unlimited, the Off-Broadway Alliance, the Broadway Women's Alliance, Honor Roll! and the Women's Media Group.

Visit: [GracewellProductions.com](http://GracewellProductions.com)



HARTFORD  
STAGE

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE  
FOR ALL THE 2025  
CONNECTICUT CRITICS  
CIRCLE NOMINEES!



**TOP ROW:** Carmen Berkeley in *Romeo & Juliet*; Lena Kaminsky in *25 Minute Ride*. **SECOND ROW:** The cast of *Romeo & Juliet* (Directed by Melia Bensussen). **THIRD ROW:** Stephanie Machado in *Laughs in Spanish*; Nathan Darrow and Nayib Felix in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Lighting Design by Evan C. Anderson); Godfrey L. Simmons in *Two Trains Running*; Nayib Felix and Sarah Chalfie in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Sound Design by Jane Shaw). **FOURTH ROW:** Nathan Darrow in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Sarah Chalfie in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Costume Design by An-lin Dauber); Rafael Jordan, Tajj Senior, and Postell Pringle in *Two Trains Running* (Directed by Gilbert McCauley); Niall Cunningham in *Romeo & Juliet*. **BOTTOM ROW:** The cast of *Romeo & Juliet* (Lighting Design by Dan Kotlowitz); Lena Kaminsky in *25 Minute Ride* (Sound Design by Jane Shaw); Carman Lacivita, Niall Cunningham, and Carmen Berkeley in *Romeo & Juliet* (Costume Design by Fabian Fidel Aguilar); Maggie Bofill in *Laughs in Spanish*. All photos by T. Charles Erickson.

### **Outstanding Director of a Play**

**Melia Bensussen**  
**Gilbert McCauley**  
**Jennifer Chang**  
**Brandon J. Dirden**  
**Rob Ruggiero**

Romeo & Juliet  
Two Trains Running  
Primary Trust  
Eden  
Fever Dreams

Hartford Stage  
Hartford Stage  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
Yale Repertory Theatre  
TheaterWorks Hartford

### **Outstanding Director of a Musical**

**Carl Andress**  
**Christopher D. Betts**  
**Kevin Connors**  
**Hunter Foster**  
**Daniel C. Levine**

The Prom  
Ragtime  
La Cage Aux Folles  
Rock of Ages  
Fiddler on the Roof

Sharon Playhouse  
Goodspeed Musicals  
Music Theatre of CT  
Sharon Playhouse  
ACT of CT

### **Outstanding Play**

**Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde**  
**El Coquí Espectacular**  
**Fever Dreams**  
**Master Class**  
**Primary Trust**

Hartford Stage  
Long Wharf Theatre  
TheaterWorks Hartford  
Music Theatre of CT.  
TheaterWorks Hartford

### **Outstanding Musical**

**Fiddler on the Roof**  
**La Cage Aux Folles**  
**The Prom**  
**Ragtime**  
**Rock of Ages**

ACT of CT  
Music Theater of CT  
Sharon Playhouse  
Goodspeed Musicals  
Sharon Playhouse.

The Broadway Broadway Cast: Alex Wasson (Halle) and Ryan Vasquez (Halle's Mom) © Justin Germaine (2024)

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## **OUR HISTORY**

The Connecticut Critics Circle, founded in 1990, is a statewide organization of reviewers, feature writers, columnists and broadcasters. Its members represent newspapers, newspaper chains, magazines, radio programs, websites, and other media outlets, reaching audiences throughout Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New York.

## **OUR PURPOSE**

The CCC Awards Program was instituted to honor the actors, directors, designers and others who make professional theater in Connecticut so outstanding. The evening is the one time of the year when artists from Connecticut theaters, as well as audiences, can gather to celebrate the varied theatrical productions from around the state.

## **OUR WEBSITE**

The organization's website, [www.ctcritics.org](http://www.ctcritics.org), provides information on Connecticut theater as well as reviews of current theatrical productions.

## **THE TOM KILLEN AWARD**

The establishment of the Tom Killen Award, bestowed upon those who have made extraordinary contributions to Connecticut's professional theater, coincided with the birth of the Connecticut Critics Circle Awards. It is a tangible way for us, his colleagues, to honor the fine young man and critic who died at the age of 33 in 1989. The Tom Killen Award is given in recognition of years of achievement and service to Connecticut theater.

**Members of the Connecticut Critics Circle**

Brooks Appelbaum, Kiersten Bjork, Donald Brown, Stuart J. Brown,  
Dolly Curtis, Kimolee Eryn, Howard Steven Frydman, Marlene S.  
Gaylinn, Bonnie K. Goldberg, Tom Holehan, Karen Isaacs, Nancy  
Sasso Janis, Timothy Leininger, Peggy Nelson, Tom Nissley,  
Zander Opper



**CONNECTICUT  
CRITICS CIRCLE**

**A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:**

Thank you for attending this year's Connecticut Critics Circle Award Ceremony. I would like to thank all the fervent fans of the arts that have continued to support our cause to applaud and improve the rich culture of theatre in our community.

On behalf of the Connecticut Critics Circle I would like to thank:

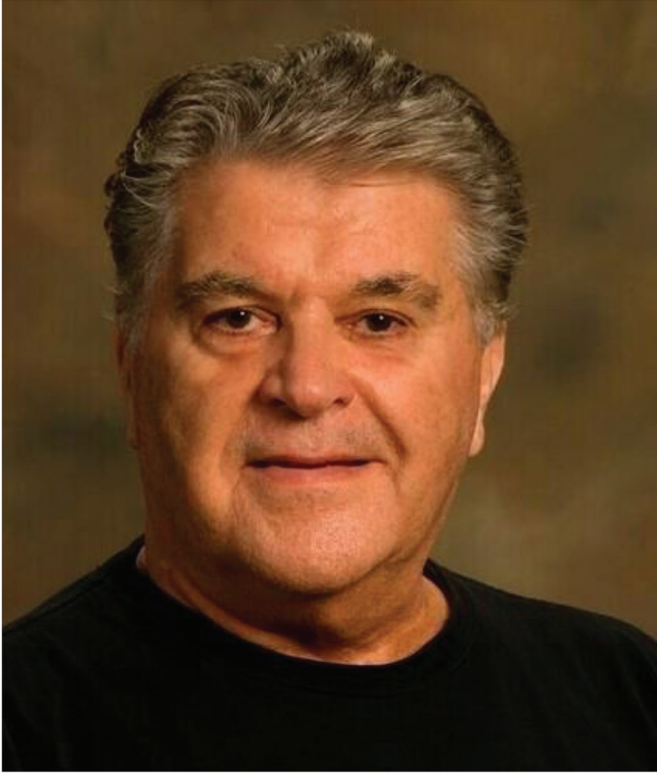
**KIERSTEN BJORK  
BONNIE GOLDBERG  
KAREN ISAACS  
NANCY SASSO JANIS  
TARA KENNEDY  
TIM LEININGER  
ZANDER OPPER**

And on behalf of the ceremony's attendees and future audiences alike, I would like to thank those who donated to the night's celebration in support of the Connecticut Critics Circle's cause.

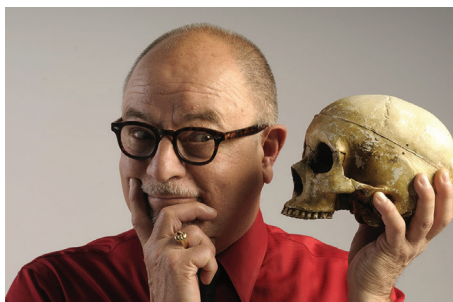
*Stuart Brown*  
**PRESIDENT  
CONNECTICUT CRITICS CIRCLE**

*In Memoriam*

## **RICHARD PHENEGER**



The Connecticut Critics Circle joins the larger arts community in grieving the loss of our friend Richard Phenegar, heart of the dramatic arts in Connecticut. We will miss his welcoming face, his patience, his personal and public support, and his generous appreciation of all thing theatre.



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**FRANK RIZZO'S**  
REVIEWS NEWS  
AND VIEWS

<https://showriz.com/>



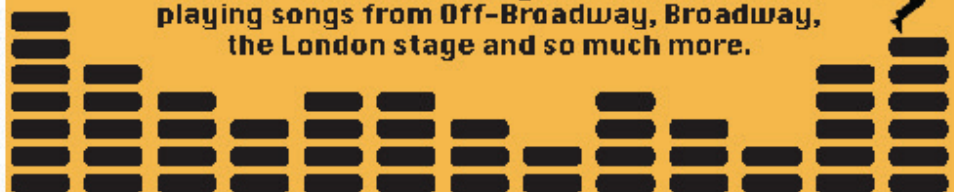
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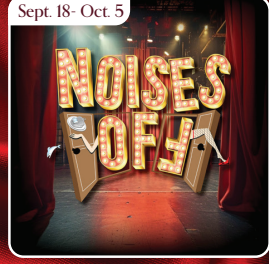
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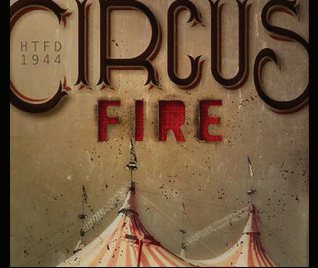
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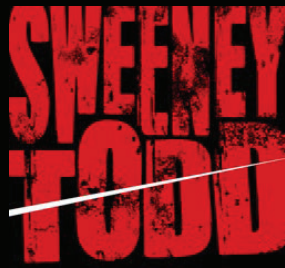
OCT 2 - NOV 2, '25



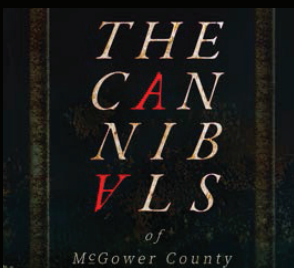
FEB 12 - MAR 15, '26



APR 16 - MAY 17, '26



JUN 5 - JUL 5, '26



JUL 30 - AUG 30, '26

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