Mariemont Players Inc.
2026 - 2027 Season



November 5- 22, 2026
Walton Creek Theatre

Welcome to Mariemont Players

The Mariemont Players (MPI) was founded in 1936 as a church group that performed plays in the village of Mariemont, Ohio. The group began a regular season of performances in the 1950s and was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on August 28, 1956 by its president, Woodrow (Woody) Jarrett. In honor of Woody & Lois Jarrett's longtime commitment to the theater, the auditorium is named for them.

In 1960, for slightly more than $8000, the group bought the old Plainville four-room school building. Volunteer members have been converting the structure into the Walton Creek Theater ever since. The original cornerstone was laid in 1869, but the present solid brick building at the intersection of Walton Creek and Muchmore Roads dates from 1910. We're fortunate to be one of the few local community theaters with a permanent home. Our continuing improvements to the building include a remodeled auditorium with new seating, aisle lights and an electromagnetic hearing loop for the hearing-impaired. Our elevator to the auditorium accommodates those with physical handicaps, including wheelchairs. A handicap accessible restroom is on the first floor.

The Players have had 1000s of members during the past 85 years. Some have even become film actors, Broadway musical directors and played roles in professional theater, TV commercials, corporate videos and voice-overs plus dozens of support roles in media and the creative arts.

Join Us!

Open audition dates for each production are announced on our Facebook page, on our website at mariemontplayers.com or behindthecurtaincincy.com. Cast requirements change on a show-to-show basis with no experience required.

There are many opportunities to work backstage as part of our technical production staff. If your talents or interests include props, costumes, set design and construction, painting, music, lights, sound or stage managing – we have something for you! Contact Vicki Rafferty at vsrraff@mac.com or Bill Pauly (set construction) at billpauly33@gmail.com about the next chance to get involved.

Become a Patron

Your generous donations make it possible to continue improving our theater. Donations are tax-deductible and are acknowledged in the program for each show of the season. You may donate online at our website (www.mariemontplayers.com) or send a check (write patron donation on the memo line) to MPI, 4101 Walton Creek Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45227.



A MILESTONE CELEBRATION
OUR 90th SEASON



This isn't just any season—it's our 90th Season, and we couldn't be more excited to share it with you!
To celebrate this milestone, we approached season selection a little differently this year. After sorting through 1,504 votes from 151 patrons, we narrowed it down to a Top 12 list of fan-favorite shows. From there, 18 directors were interviewed and given the chance to select three productions from the Top 12 list or choose a wild card from Mariemont Players' rich 90-year history. The Artistic Committee and the Board then put together the 6-show season we think you'll enjoy.

If you are not already a subscriber and like what we have coming up for your enjoyment, why not save yourself a little money and become a subscriber. You can pick up a brochure in the lobby, fill it out and leave it with the House Manager or give the Box Office a call at (513) 501-1718 and our Box Office Managers would love to assist you.

THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED MARIEMONT PLAYERS OVER THE PAST 90 YEARS!

SEASON SUBSCRIPTIONS STILL ON SALE

Save yourself some money by purchasing a subscription vs. purchasing individual tickets. Being a subscriber also allows you to exchange or customize your dates/times. You can purchase a 4 - show subscription to finish out the season. Pick up a brochure in the lobby to fill out & return or call the Box Office at (513) 501-1718. As always, for any questions please contact the Box Office by phone or email MPIBoxoffice@gmail.com.

Mariemont Players Inc.
presents

A Tuna Christmas

By Ed Howard, Joe Sears, Jaston Williams



Original Direction by Norma Niinemets
Directed & Produced by Debbi & Douglas Berlon
Assistant Directed by Jill Rothmeeler



Setting
Tuna, Texas (Pop. 201)

ACT 1
Scene 1: Control room of Radio OKKK
Scene 2: Home of the Bumiller family
Scene 3: Didi's Used Weapons Shop
Scene 4: Backyard of Aunt Pearl Burras

INTERMISSION - 15 MINUTES

ACT 2
Scene 1: Tuna High School Gymnasium
Scene 2: The Tastee Kreme: Tuna's Premier Restaurant
Scene 3A: Outside of the Greater Tuna Humane Society
Scene 3B: Didi & R.R.'s Backyard
Scene 3C: Vera Carp's Home
Scene 3D: Home of Pearl Burras

Danny Davies as:
Arles Stuvie.
Didi Snavely
Petey Fisk
Jody Bumiller
Stanley Bumiller
Charlene Bumiller
Vera Carp
Dixie Deberry
Helen Bedd
Farley Burkhalter
Garland Poteet





Wayne Wright as:
Thurston Wheelis
Elmer Watkins
Bertha Bumiller
Leonard Childers
R.R. Snavely
Pearl Burras
Inita Goodwin
Phoebe Burkhalter
Joe Bob Lipsey

"A Tuna Christmas" is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

Director's Notes



Welcome to Mariemont Players and to the hilarious, quirky, and big- hearted world of Tuna, Texas. Bringing *A Tuna Christmas* back to our stage is far more than directing a beloved holiday comedy. It is a deeply personal labor of love, an homage to our dear friend and mentor, Norma Niinemets, who first brought the *Tuna* series to MPI in 1989.

Norma was a true visionary director. She possessed an extraordinary gift for comedy and pacing, but more than that, she cared deeply about the entire theatrical experience and was fiercely dedicated to MPI. Having both met Norma in the 1980s and collaborated with her on dozens of productions over the decades, stepping into her footsteps together as co-directors is a profound privilege.

Norma's original production introduced MPI to the unforgettable combined talents of Danny Davies and Wayne Wright. Their legendary performances defined these characters for local theatre lovers, setting a benchmark of warmth, brilliance, and sheer comedic joy.

In preparing this production, we wanted to remain as faithful as possible to Norma's original vision. Re-examining old rehearsal scripts, hand-written notes, and archival video footage has felt like opening a time capsule filled with memories of brilliant theatre making and cherished friendship.

As you join us in the theater tonight, we hope you feel both the lighthearted joy of these eccentric characters and the deep warmth of a story brought back to life with immense gratitude and love.

Thank you for being part of our audience, for supporting local theatre, and for helping us celebrate the incredible legacy of Norma, Danny, and Wayne.

Warmest holiday wishes,
Debbi and Douglas Berlon
Co-Directors, *A Tuna Christmas*

SPECIAL THANKS

Dee Anne Bryll
First Financial Bank
Jimmy Jackson
Gayle Jackson Stuller
Emerson Rothmeeler
Sandy Hebbe
Jon Pullen
Rilla Foster
Mark Stuller
Robin Moro
Chuck Ingram
Don Phillips
Footlighters
Jill Rothmeeler



Hearing Loops allow people who wear hearing aids to directly receive the sound from the stage microphones in their own hearing aids. If your hearing aids have a wireless receiver called a T-coil or telecoil, just switch it on. Talk to your audiologist to see if your instruments are so equipped and how to activate it. Many hearing devices can have either a T (no background noise pickup) or MT program (blended microphone and T-coil program).

If your hearing aid doesn't have a telecoil, you may borrow a separate loop receiver with a headset, available in the first floor lobby. Ask an usher if you would like to use one.

For questions about your hearing aids and telecoils talk to your audiologist.
To learn more about hearing loops visit:
hearingloop.org or brownaudioservices.com

PRODUCTION TEAM

Directors	Debbi & Douglas Berlon
Producers	Debbi & Douglas Berlon
Assistant Director	Jill Rothmeeler
Stage Manager	Janet Wisner
Set Design	Douglas Berlon, Bill Pauly
Set & Creative Painting	Betsy Obermeyer
Costume Design	Debbi Berlon, Josh Howell, Greta Manolis, Meggan Peters, Judi Anderson Turner, Wayne Wright
Wig Design & Construction	Debbi Berlon, Jenny Crigler Herndon
Dressers	Debbi Berlon, Mackenzie Heuer, Amie Marmer, Greta Manolis, Emily Romano
Properties	Debbi Berlon
Lighting Design	CDJ Design
Sound Design	Douglas Berlon
Running Crew	Douglas Berlon, Emerson Rothmeeler, Jill Rothmeeler
Master Carpenter	Bill Pauly
Set Construction Crew	Bill Pauly, Fred Murrell, Don Phillips, Dan Newyear, Kirk Gray
Light & Sound Execution	Steve Winslow
Lobby Display	Jim Curtis
House Manager	Vicki Rafferty
Photography	Kristy Rucker
Original Graphic Art	Teresa Johns
Program/Online Program	Vicki Rafferty
Publicity	Kristen Vincenty
Box Office Managers	Ed Cohen, Tom Peters
Website	Kristen Vincenty

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Ohio Community Theatre Association

About the Production Team



Debbi Berlon (Director, Producer, Costume & Wig Designer, Dresser, Prop Mistress) - In addition to performing throughout Cincinnati and Atlanta since 1986, Debbi is an original member of the *Tuna* Team since the first production in 1989. “Performing and participating in local community theatre has given me so much joy and laughter, lifelong friendships, and the best husband ever! I hope you feel the love and commitment we have all poured into this production. And I hope we’ve done justice to your memories of the original.” This is for Norma.



Douglas Berlon (Director, Producer, Sound Design, Set Design, Light Design, Stage Crew) - Douglas considers working alongside his wife, Debbi, his partner in everything since they met at Mariemont Players in 1991, his greatest joy. This show is also a love letter to Norma Niinemets, its original director, who was a mentor, dear friend, and co-conspirator since they met in 1980. Reuniting with Wayne and Danny, Norma's original *Tuna* men, feels like coming home.



Jill Rothmeeler (Assistant Director, Stage Crew) - Jill is thrilled to be back behind the scenes with Mariemont Players, a place she’s called her theatre home for over 30 years! She has Norma to thank for bringing her here and Doug and Debbi to thank for keeping her here all of these years! This show is especially exciting because, for the very first time, she gets to share the experience with her niece, Emerson! Jill couldn’t be happier to make some new theatre memories with family and friends, proving that the best part of theatre is always the people you share it with! Merry Christmas!!



Janet Wisner (Stage Manager) - Janet has been an award-winning presence in local theater since 1999. She has proudly worked with Mariemont Players, the Footlighters, the Village Players and Cincinnati Music Theatre. Janet recently worked with MPI as stage manager for this season’s opening production of *Arsenic and Old Lace.* She is thrilled to be back at Mariemont and stage managing this talented cast and crew. Thank you for supporting live theater and enjoy the show!



Betsy Obermeyer (Set & Creative Painting) - Betsy is pleased to once again beautify the Mariemont stage. Prior Mariemont credits include *Scotland Road, Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde, The Book of Will, Steel Magnolias, Ain't Misbehavin*, and the one that started it all, *Plaza Suite,* back in 2009. With an MFA in theatrical design from the Ohio State University, she is presently the 2nd VP of ACT Cincinnati. Painting the set with her junior assistant brings her joy and she's grateful for the opportunity.



Mackenzie Heuer (Dresser) -A Boone County teacher, Mackenzie is excited to return to Tuna, Texas as a dresser, having previously worked on a production with Hardin County Playhouse. When not in the classroom or backstage, Mackenzie enjoys reading, gaming, and bringing theatrical visions to life through set decoration. She's thrilled to be back in Tuna for the holidays!



Greta Manolis (Dresser) - I love theater - especially community theater where there is SO MUCH talent, and still *Guys and Dolls* have *9-5* jobs from here to *Oklahoma,* and the way everyone uses their talent is just *Wizard!* Makes me want to break out in *Music, Man.* (Just a few of the productions I have been a part of). And now, I'm excited to help dress the fabulous talent in this current production. God bless Texas!



Amie Marmer (Dresser) - Amie is thrilled to be returning to Mariemont Players for her fourth *Tuna* production, - and fourth time keeping Wayne dressed and hopefully presentable. Over the years, she has taken on many hats in community theater, but dressing remains a favorite. Amie is forever grateful to Norma for asking her to be part of this production years ago and for introducing her to such wonderfully talented people. She feels lucky to be part of the *Tuna* family and hopes you enjoy the show as much as she enjoys trying to keep up with it!



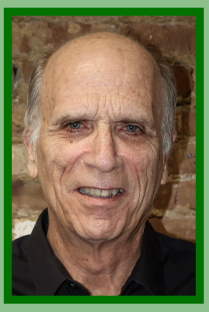
Emily Romano (Dresser) - Emily is excited to be part of such a wonderful team and making a return to costumes! Emily, who has a degree in fashion design, has experience performing quick changes at men's fashion week in Paris and is thrilled to put these skills to use in such a high energy show. She has been backstage in various forms as stage crew and sound and light operator.



Emerson Rothmeeler (Stage Crew) - Emerson is excited to be working on her first show at Mariemont Players and her first show ever! She loves soccer, DP, hanging out with her friends and cheering on her Cincinnati Bengals. She would like to thank Doug and Debbi for including her in this show. Emerson would also like to thank her mom and dad for always supporting her. She hopes you have a Merry Christmas and enjoy the show!



Bill Pauly (Master Carpenter) - Bill started building sets for MPI in November of 2012. He is fortunate in having the assistance of five talented guys in creating sets with a wide range of design challenges. Bill has received numerous awards from MPI and ACT, but still feels that his greatest reward is the reaction from audience members when the curtain opens. He is also very happy to be part of a first class theater production, where the set can allow the actors to feel alive and creative. He wants to thank MPI, the patrons, and his wife, Angie, for the opportunity to be part of this production.



Steve Winslow (Light and Sound Execution) - Steve is honored to be one of the lucky few to be working on this show with Directors Debbi & Doug Berlon and Stage Manager Janet Wisner. Last May, Steve worked lights-and-sound execution for Doug and Janet on *The Curious Savage.* In March 2015, under the tutelage of Amie Marmer, Steve was one of the dressers for the MPI production of *Tuna Does Vegas.*



Ed Cohen (Co-Box Office Manager) - Ed has directed in the Cincinnati area for over 35 years. His shows at Mariemont include *Of Mice and Men, Never the Sinner, A Murder of Crows, Rumors, The Sunshine Boys a*nd *The Blue Moon Dancing.* He has also directed at CCM, NKU, Xavier and Miami University, as well as The Covedale, Falcon Theatre and The Carnegie. Currently, Ed teaches in the Theatre and Dance Department at NKU.



Tom Peters (Co-Box Office Manager) - Tom has a BFA in Theatre and a BSEd in Theatre & Speech Education from Ohio University and an MA in directing from Roosevelt University. He has 40 years of experience teaching theatre. Tom has won several awards related to teaching including the Acclaims Theatre Educator Judges Award - 2007, Theatre Educator of the Year - 2008, The League of Cincinnati Theatres MVP Award - 2012 and the ACT Cincinnati 2019 Roger Grooms Award.

A Very Special Thank You To -

George's
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT

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THE AUTHORS

Ed Howard is the co-author of the plays *Greater Tuna, A Tuna Christmas, Red, White and Tuna,* and *Tuna does Vegas,* all published by Samuel French. He also co-authored *Splendora,* based on the novel by Edward Swift, and book and lyrics of the musicals *The Body Snatchers* and *Boy Problems.* He is presently at work on the play *The Landscaper,* about a conservative cul-de-sac neighborhood and a mysterious immigrant from Central America. Howard is also the author of *The Summer of Daisy Fay* and *The Glory Getter,* both based on Daisy Fay and the Miracle Man, the first novel by Fanny Flagg; *Hamlet, Texas,* a modern day retelling of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* set in West Texas on the ranch of an oil tycoon; and book and lyrics for *The Tempest Tossed*, a musical comedy spoof of *The Tempest,* featuring Shakespeare and the Muses. Over the last thirty-plus years, Howard has directed *Tuna* co-authors and stars Joe Sears and Jason Williams and other stars, including Oscar nominee John Hawkes and Oscar, Emmy and Tony winner Michael Peters, in national tours of the *Tuna* plays. Off-Broadway, he directed *Laughing Stock* by Romulus Lenny, starring Frances Sternhagan and Jane Connell, which was selected by Time magazine as one of the top plays of 1984. The *Tuna* plays were awarded the Los Angeles Dramalogue award, the San Francisco Bay Area Critics Award, and received Helen Hayes Award nominations. After its critically acclaimed Broadway debut, *A Tuna Christmas* was published in Best Plays of 1995 and garnered Mr. Sears a Tony nomination.

Joe Sears is an American playwright and actor best known as the co-creator and star of the wildly popular *Greater Tuna* series of comedic plays. With his longtime writing and performing partner, Jaston Williams, Sears helped craft a series of satirical, character-driven works that affectionately poke fun at small-town life in Texas while offering sharp insights into American culture and community. Born in Texas in 1948, Sears began acting at an early age and developed a love for storytelling and regional humor. In the early 1980s, he teamed up with Jaston Williams and director Ed Howard to create *Greater Tuna*, a two-man play in which the actors portray over 20 eccentric residents of the fictional town of Tuna, Texas. The play premiered in 1981 and became a runaway success, leading to sequels including *A Tuna Christmas, Red, White and Tuna,* and *Tuna does Vegas*. Sears and Williams became celebrated for their quick character changes, sharp comedic timing, and the emotional depth they brought to their portrayals. *A Tuna Christmas* earned Sears a Tony nomination for Best Actor in a play in 1995, further cementing the duo's national reputation. In addition to writing and performing, Sears has been active in arts education and regional theatre, encouraging young performers and playwrights. His work, though comedic, often highlights themes of tolerance, individuality, and the quirks that bind communities together. Joe Sears's contributions to American theatre have been praised for their originality, humor, and humanity. Through the lens of Tuna, Texas, he has created a lasting and beloved comic universe that continues to entertain and resonate with audiences across the country.
~ From *StageAgent*

Jaston Williams is best known as the co-creator and co-star of the beloved *Greater Tuna* series of plays, including *Greater Tuna, A Tuna Christmas, Red, White, And Tuna* and *Tuna Does Vegas.* These two-person productions have captivated audiences across the U.S. for more than three decades, with performances on and off Broadway and at prestigious venues like the Kennedy Center, Ford's Theatre, the Alley Theatre in Houston, Pasadena Playhouse, and the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco.
~ From *Broadway World*



Thank You Mariemont 2026 - 2027 Season Patrons!

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~As of 10/23/26

Lighting The Way For The Next 90 Years

Tonight you are seeing the future of Mariemont Players in action.

Thanks to early supporters and a generous $25,000 grant from Columbia Township, our proud home for decades, we have officially installed our new modern light board and our first four state-of-the-art LED fixtures.

But our journey isn't finished yet.

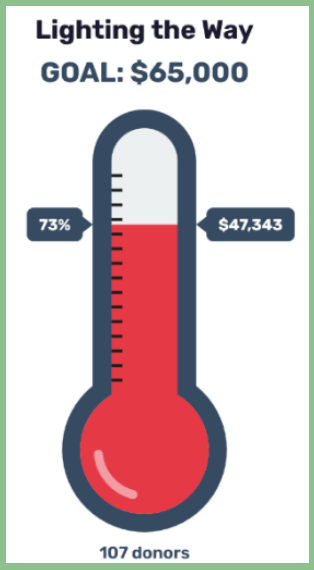
We are working to raise $65,000 to completely upgrade our aging equipment to a modern, energy-efficient LED system. Our stories deserve to look as brilliant as they feel, and every contribution brings us closer to illuminating our stage for generations to come.

Join the incredible group of donors listed in tonight's program and help us reach our goal.

How to Give:
Scan the QR code below to donate instantly.

Mail a check payable to Mariemont Players with "Lighting the Way" in the memo line to:

Mariemont Players
Lighting the Way Campaign
4101 Walton Creek Rd
Cincinnati, OH 45227



Every gift makes a difference!

Contributions of $100 or more will be honored with special recognition that will remain on display for five years following the campaign.

Thank you for keeping our theater glowing!





LIGHTING THE WAY DONORS



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~ As of 10/12/2026

Mariemont Players' Audience Services

For Your Comfort and Safety

- **Restrooms:** An handicap-accessible restroom on the first floor lobby level, and two additional restrooms in the basement.
- **Refreshments:** Available prior to show and during intermission in the first floor Hurst lobby.
- **Elevator:** Accessible from parking lot, lobby and auditorium. Ask an usher for assistance.
- **Emergency Exits:** Located at the left and right of the front aisle and at the left and right sides of the stage.
- **AED (Automated External Defibrillator):** Located on the top landing just outside the auditorium, designed to be used by anyone in a case of sudden cardiac arrest.
- **Hearing Loop:** For the hearing-impaired patron with a T-coil equipped hearing aid. If your hearing aid is equipped with a wireless receiver called a T-coil or telecoil, just switch it on. If your hearing aid doesn't have a telecoil, you may borrow a separate loop receiver with a headset, available in the first floor lobby will call area.

Good Neighbor Policies

- Latecomers cannot be admitted until a suitable break.
- PLEASE be sure all cell phones, pagers and personal alarms are TURNED OFF, not just placed on silent or vibrate.
- Be considerate of those around you. Talking and rustling papers distract the performers and other audience members.
- Food and drinks are not allowed in the auditorium, except water bottles. Please dispose of all refreshments before entering the theater.
- Walton Creek Theater is a smoke-free building. There are smoking receptacles outside.
- Publisher's copyright strictly forbids photography, video or audio recording of any kind during the performance.

Contact Us
Mariemont Players
4101 Walton Creek Road
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Box Office #: 513 501-1718
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MARIEMONT PLAYERS INC
Artistically Yours

UPCOMING PRODUCTION
January 7- 24, 2027



“Blithe Spirit” is presented by arrangement with Concord Theatricals on behalf of Samuel French, Inc.
www.concordtheatricals.com

Do you love Cincinnati Community Theatre?

Consider sponsoring part or all of an upcoming Mariemont Players, Inc. Production!

We have a season brimming with possibility! You, or your company, could make our season possible! We have so many opportunities for support. From musicians and costumes to set building and opening night receptions. Your support can shape the community! Scan the QR code below to learn more.









Contact MPITreasurer1936@gmail.com to get involved!