





# HERE TO PLAY

*Barrington's Parker Players Theater Company  
has found its new home at The Barrington  
and is here to stay*

WRITTEN BY **JENNIFER MCHUGH**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KYLE FLUBACKER**







# PARKER PLAYERS

## THEATER COMPANY

Parker Players Theater Company crafts productions showcasing the talents of our artistic community and delivers high-quality theater to Barrington and the surrounding areas. Dedicated to staging performances that bridge the distance between audience and artist, PPTC invites you to experience the connection.

*Above: Artistic Director Jennifer McHugh is surrounded by her script collection. She reads and dreams of the ideal team to bring each story to life.*

*Opening spread: The Parker Players are (from left) Dan McHugh, Karen Robinson, Ray Harris, Emily Douville, Jennifer McHugh, Dan Thake, Richard Dominick, Ellen Douville, Lori Rowe, Fran Taglia. Romeo, holding PPTC's 'Stage the Build' Playbill, is the adorable son of Fran Taglia, and Graham Kostic. Not pictured: Ann Field, Joe Bateman, Sharon Schmidt.*

### ***A black box. A red curtain.***

The eye representing the actor's gaze.... or is it the audience? A heart symbolizing the connective emotions between performer and patron. The final line is spoken, the lights dim and within the quiet just before the applause lies the magic. The swell of feeling—whether it be joy, sadness, nostalgia, discomfort, or wonder—that is the purpose of theater.

In 2015, Marc Parker and a few like-minded Barrington dreamers had an idea, to establish a community theater that would offer a variety of productions featuring local talent, performed in an intimate, black-box theater space. After years of successfully presenting a variety of productions, the State of Illinois and Canadian Pacific Railroad purchased the land and building that housed the theater as part of its plans to eventually build an underpass at Route 59 and Northwest Highway. Rather than view this turn of events as insurmountable, we chose to reinvent



*Board President and Scenic Designer Dan Thake spends most of his time just as you see him here. On a ladder, wearing a toolbelt, and on the phone, conducting PPTC business.*

ourselves. Parker Players Theater Company re-formed in 2019 as a traveling theater ensemble. Our non-profit then focused on two goals: to craft productions of the highest quality and to once again, secure a permanent theater home.

We've pursued both goals with boundless energy. We produced "The Gift of the Magi" in December of 2019, started production for "The Fantasticks" (shut down by the covid pandemic in 2020), staged three dinner theater cabarets in the summer of 2021 as the pandemic receded, then returned vigorously with fully staged productions of Agatha Christie's "Spider's Web," Nora Ephron's "Love, Loss & What I Wore," Reginald Rose's "12 Angry Men," the farcical comedy, "Suite Surrender," and the contemporary comedies "Ripcord" (written by David Lindsey-Abaire), and "Love/Sick" (written by John Cariani).

And, Parker Players Theater Company (PPTC) achieved all of this without a permanent theater home. We've utilized basements, garages, stables, and empty offices to build sets and rehearse. We've rented storage containers to house our technical equipment, props, and costumes. We've scouted and rented Barrington area restaurants and event spaces to present



*Dan McHugh is vice-president and PPTC's business backbone. He dreams about how to keep more money IN the bank than out.*

our productions, adapting each venue to provide the best theater experience possible.

In addition, we steadily increased awareness among the Chicagoland theater community of our commitment to providing a demanding-yet-supportive home for the artistic process. When we held auditions for "The Gift of the Magi" in October 2019, not a single person showed up. As we write this article, we are preparing to audition over 72 people for 17 roles in our upcoming July production of "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest."

## **THEATER NEVER RESTS**

We work with creative visionaries in our hometown and throughout the Chicago area for each production, selecting guest directors, designers, stage managers and run crews comprised of both professionals and volunteers—and sometimes, the best scenario of all—professionals who volunteer their gifts!

Our creative team extends beyond the stage. We launched our new logo and tagline in the autumn of 2022 with the professional branding guidance of Barrington local, Liz Benedetto. Our original graphics created for each production are the work of another Barrington local, Kristine Keegan (Blue





Ray Harris and Dan Thake are the Light, Sound, Scenic Design Team, board members, and buddies.



Artistic Director Jennifer McHugh and Resident Guest Director Richard Dominick. And, the fun or not so fun idea of auditioning to be cast in PPTC productions.

"My belief in the Parker Players Theater Company is based on the quality of the community enjoyment you provide and the dedication of your board to make the commitment to create an organization that will bring entertainment and mind-growth programming for all ages in the town of Barrington. And what better place to accomplish this than in The Barrington facilities."

**-RUSH N. HILL II, FORMER CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RECON OPTICAL, VILLAGE OF BARRINGTON**

Frog Design). Barrington native, Kyle Flubacker, takes a quick break from his packed schedule photographing events and productions at Steppenwolf Theatre, the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Harris Theater, and The Field Museum to ensure that each Parker Players' production is also beautifully photographed.

Theater never rests. We are always in pre-production, rehearsal, or performance, fine-tuning who we are and our commitment as a small,

visionary, and fearless team dedicated to delivering high-quality theatrical productions to you. And yet...

Amid this exciting whirlwind, we never lost sight of our second goal. Securing and building a state-of-the-art theater in and for Barrington.

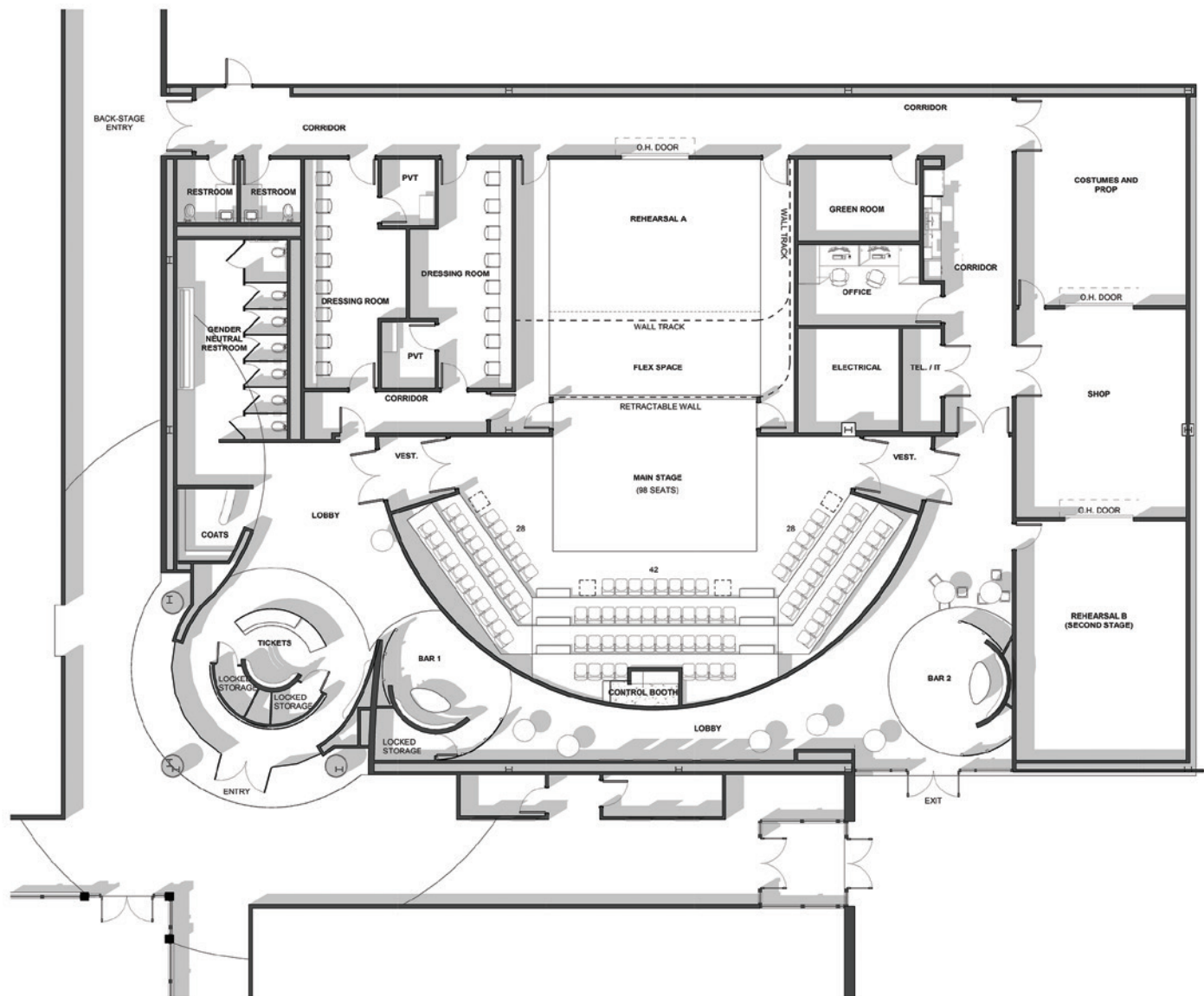
Then, a phone call.

Rush Hill, the lead representative of Bourns, Inc., a California based company that owns The Barrington complex at 540 W. Northwest Highway, contacted PPTC's board president, Dan Thake.

Rush envisioned a major philanthropic project, turning a portion of the sprawling complex into an arts and performance venue for the community. He chose PPTC as the ideal fulcrum to usher this state-of-the-art Black Box Theater into fruition and steward its success for years to come.

## **SOMETHING'S COMING**

Conversations began in earnest in late summer 2022. Rush Hill, the Bourns, Inc. team and local building manager, Dave Fernekes, assisted tirelessly, donating significant time, effort, and financial support to the project. They initiated discussions with village representatives to ensure the support of



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local government. They considered various theater locations within their campus, prioritizing overall patron experience, and strived to fold the new venue seamlessly into their already thriving complex. Most importantly, the team envisioned the growth trajectory of a brand-new not-for-profit theater and offered generous financial terms with a favorable lease structure designed to ensure the success of theater operations in perpetuity.

Karl Heitman and his team from Heitman Architects Inc., stepped in and generously offered their partnership by designing the state-of-the-art performance space replete with modern architectural styling; an inviting lobby; two cocktail and hors d'oeuvres lounges; relaxing café areas both inside and outside the building; and an intimate interior Black Box Theater outfitted with the latest lighting and audio technology where no seat will have poor sightlines or muffled acoustics.

The back of house offers performers, educators, designers, and staff two large dressing rooms; two private bathrooms; a green room and kitchenette; rehearsal rooms; costume, prop storage and repair areas; and a set construction shop.

In short, the experience on either side of this theater's fourth wall will be

Parker Players Theater Co. just received a \$31,000 grant from the Barrington Area Community Foundation to be applied towards seating and risers for the theater build. We wish to thank them for their confidence and support in the realization of building a community theater venue.

– DAN THAKE

superlative, leaving both performer and patron with the desire to return and enjoy the space.

This theater will be a home not only for PPTC, but will also serve as a shared community space. Imagine all the groups that could benefit from having access to a local professional theater venue—children's theater performances, dance studio and company performances, music and band performances, improv groups, educational programming, team building, and business symposiums.

## HELP US STAGE THE BUILD

Born from a philanthropic and cultural vision shared between Parker Players Theater Company and the owners of The Barrington complex on Northwest Highway, this theater and presentation space will provide






opportunity for all interested parties to come and nurture Barrington's growth both artistically and economically.

Now, we are asking you to partner with us to "stage the build" of a permanent home for the performing arts and to establish a legacy of use for not only us, but also future generations of Barrington area actors, artists, and small businesses.

We are seeking community financial support to complete the build of this pivotal project that creates a unique, state-of-the-art theater and multi-purpose space in Barrington. A theater space that fosters thought-provoking and immersive artistic performances and cultural experiences FOR the surrounding area, FROM the surrounding area.

Join us. Together we can stage the build and realize the vision of a state-of-the-art black box theater in Barrington. 

### REACH OUR TEAM:

President: Dan Thake 847-533-1113

President@ParkerPlayersTheater.org

Vice-President: Dan McHugh 847-809-4005

Daniel.McHugh@ParkerPlayersTheater.org

Artistic Director: Jennifer McHugh 847-809-9592

JMcHugh@ParkerPlayersTheater.org

ParkerPlayersTheater.org



Artistic Director Jennifer McHugh is a Barrington area resident, actor, and a long-time supporter of Parker Players Theater Company.

Photographer Kyle Flubacker is sought by theater, dance, and event companies throughout the U.S. for his ability to make art out of art. Kyle grew up in Barrington, played baseball for BHS, graduated Vanderbilt University (while also playing baseball), then discovered a passionate expertise for photography and launched an auspicious and rewarding career. Lucky for PPTC, Kyle has a soft spot for Barrington and lends his talents helping to ensure the success of live theater in his hometown.



## PARKER PLAYERS THEATER COMPANY

**Board of Directors:** Dan Thake, Dan McHugh,  
Fran Taglia, Joe Bateman, Ray Harris,  
Sharon Schmidt, Lori Rowe, Ann Field,  
Emily Douville

**Grant Writer:** Ellen Douville

**Artistic Director:** Jennifer McHugh

**Graphic Design:** Kristine Keegan-Blue Frog Design

**Photographer:** Kyle Flubacker

**Creative Partner:** Liz Benedetto,  
Ashby Creative Lab

**Lighting/Sound Design:** Ray Harris

**Properties Design:** Karen Robinson

**Scenic Design:** Dan Thake, Emily Douville,  
Dan McHugh

**Costume Design:** Sharon Schmidt,  
Shawn Quinlan

**Guest Directors:** Richard Dominick, Julie Price,  
Jenilee Houghton

**Stage Managers:** Kate Schwarz, Carly Mulert,  
Pryor McHugh

## PPTC PERFORMANCES

### 2015

*Darn Cubbies*  
*Naked Lunch*

### 2016

*CATS*

### 2017

*Smalls Talk*  
*Alice in Wonderland*  
*Snow White and the 7 Emojis*

### 2018

*Bye Bye Birdie*  
*The Odd Couple*

### 2019

*Love, Loss and What I Wore*  
*Barrington in Broadway*  
*The Wizard of Oz*  
*The Gift of the Magi*

### 2020

*The Fantasticks*

### 2021

*Dine & Delight Cabaret Series*  
*Spider's Web*

### 2022

*Love Loss & What I Wore*  
*12 Angry Men*  
*Suite Surrender*  
*Ripcord*

### 2023

*Love/Sick*  
*One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*