



The title "THE NANCE" is written in a large, bold, black serif font with a pink outline. The word "THE" is smaller and positioned above "NANCE". The text is set against a background of blue brushstrokes that form a shape resembling the state of Ohio.

June 26th - 28th, 2026

Sorg Opera House
63 South Main Street - Middletown - Ohio 45044



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Managing Artistic Director

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Sorg Opera House
63 S. Main Street
Middletown, OH 45044

Box Office

513-425-7140

Website

middletownlyric.org

Middletown Lyric Theatre
is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3)
organization



Welcome Back to Middletown Lyric Theatre!

After closing our doors at 1530 Central Avenue in 2024, we have certainly missed the people, the energy, and the shared experience that only live theatre can create. But time away gave us space to rest, reflect, and talk about the future. Those conversations led us here — to a new home, and a full season of theatre as **Lyric Theatre at the Sorg**.

This season is built around one idea: the search for connection — to each other, to our purpose, and to the stories that shape us. From the simple, everyday joys of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*, to the courage and identity at the heart of *The Nance...* from the quest for meaning in *PIPPIN*, to the artistic discipline and vulnerability explored in *Master Class*, and finally to the timeless spirit of generosity in *A Christmas Carol: A Live Radio Play* — each production asks, in its own way, what it means to find your place in the world and to share it with others.

We would not be returning without the support of many people and organizations who believe in the value of theatre in Middletown. We are deeply grateful to the Sorg Revitalization Group, the Middletown Community Foundation, the Miriam G. Knoll Charitable Foundation, and Barney Riesbeck of State Farm Insurance for helping make this new chapter possible.



Middletown Lyric Theatre

Sponsored in part by:
The Middletown Community Foundation
present

THE NANCE

By Douglas Carter Beane

With:

Heather Adams, Brock Bornhorst, Bill Brewer,
Charmien Byrd, Steve Deckman, Jocelyn Wright, Zella Younce

Scenic Design
CHARLEY SHAFOR

Lighting & Sound Design
EDWIN TOY

Costume Design
GAIL RUDOLPH & CHARLEY SHAFOR

Hair/Wig Design
MEGAN REHBERG

Production Assistance:

Heather Adams, Chopper Wayne Chord, Beth Cook, Amy and Steve Deckman,
The Griffith Family, Melodie LaNicca, Angie Markham, Karah McCoy, Danica Murphy,
Christyn New, Karen Oheler, Mary Beth Benken-Riesenberg, Gail Rudolph,
Charley Shafor, Edwin Toy, Derek Wright, Jocelyn Wright, Regan Wright, Zella Younce

Production Photography provided by
Tiffany Garfinkle - TAM Photos

Sound and Lighting Equipment & Support provided by
Zeke Garfinkle - Hi-Tech Event Production

Backstage Manager
Heather Adams

Choreography by
Abbie Miller

Music Direction by
Jay Mills

Directed by
CHARLEY SHAFOR

Original Broadway Production By Lincoln Center Theater, New York City, 2013
Original Music by Glen Kelly

THE NANCE is presented by special arrangement with Broadway Licensing, LLC,
servicing the Dramatists Play Service collection. (www.dramatists.com)

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The first recorded political battle over homosexuality dates back to ancient Athens in 346 BCE, when the politician Aeschines prosecuted his rival Timarchus under a law that stripped citizens of their political rights if they had prostituted themselves to other men. In our play, it's 1937, and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia is waging his own crusade - opposing homosexuality as a "vice" to be scrubbed from New York City. During his tenure (1934 - 1945), he cracked down on gay establishments, closed bars, and notoriously banned drag queens from appearing in Times Square.

Fast forward to 2026—over 1,600 years since that first prosecution in Athens and more than 80 years since LaGuardia fought queer existence at every turn. Today, the LGBTQIA+ community is still fighting over transgender rights, access to gender-affirming healthcare, free expression in schools, and basic civil rights protections. These stories alone are reason enough for our theatre company to show up, to be supported, and to emphasize the importance of learning through the power of theatre and arts education. Theatre has always existed to lift the unseen, amplify the unheard, and embrace those pushed to the margins. We believe this production does all of that—and more.

Was this show easy? No. Was it perhaps more than a small community theatre "should" take on? Maybe. Is it a show a small theatre like ours should be doing? Absolutely. Our world is messy, and it's through stories and conversations that we begin to understand the journeys of others. The journey for this cast and creative team has been long, meaningful, and deeply human.

None of this would be possible without the support we receive from The SORG Revitalization Group, The Middletown Community Foundation, The Miriam G. Knoll Charitable Fund, Barney Riesbeck of State Farm Insurance, and all our individual donors and season ticket holders. Much like the characters in this show, it is the people who show up for you repeatedly and who make the work possible.

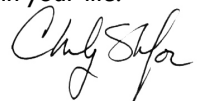
To the cast & crew: thank you for taking on the monumental task of these characters and understanding that their words still echo today. Many of you are new to theatre, and I applaud your willingness to step up and put yourselves out there for a show that means so much to the people it represents.

And as always, it is the core group of MLT volunteers who make everything happen. Without you, we simply could not function. To all the tried-and-true: THANK YOU for everything you do, every day, to keep MLT going.

We also welcomed a few new folks who went above and beyond. A special shout-out to our intern from Miami University, Karah McCoy, who hopes to use her education to strengthen the nonprofit sector. And especially to our newest volunteer, Heather Adams, whose passion, creativity, and resilience made her an integral part of bringing this show to life.

We all know we're living in a time when politics, personal beliefs, lifestyles, and freedoms are tested daily. Maybe someday we can learn from the stories and histories of others simply by sharing them - and by living our own lives authentically, as I believe we are meant to.

Thank you for attending. I hope you leave the theatre today a little more tolerant, a little more understanding, and with a lot more appreciation of the people in your life.



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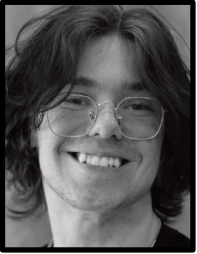
WHO'S WHO



Heather Adams (Rose / Backstage Manager)

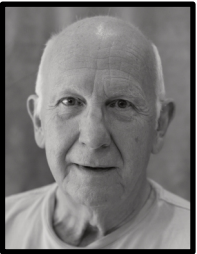
Heather has not been involved in theatre for quite some time, but she is thrilled to be returning with MLT. Throughout this production, she has learned many new skills and is especially grateful to Charley and Edwin for sharing their knowledge and for their patience. She has had a fantastic experience and would like to thank the many wonderful people she has had the pleasure of working with in both the cast and creative team. Heather also extends her heartfelt thanks to her family

for their continued support. She looks forward to participating in many future productions with MLT.



Brock Bornhorst (Ned)

Brock's a cool guy who does cool things,



Bill Brewer (Chauncey Miles)

Bill is delighted to be appearing again with the MLT since he was the Narrator in *Into the Woods*. He most recently appeared as Captain Brackett in Fort Lauderdale's Broadway Series production *South Pacific* and in productions of *Memphis*, *42nd Street*, and *Sister Act*. He has appeared in Richmond Shakespeare Festival's *As You Like It* as well as previously in *A Christmas Carol*. He has appeared with Fever Productions in the *Jury Experience* in Cincinnati and Washington, DC. Other

SE Florida credits include Lake Worth Playhouse (Daddy Warbucks in *Annie*), Delray Beach Playhouse (*Stage Struck*..Broadway World Nomination). A proud graduate of Otterbein University and Miami (OH) University, he has worked as an actor or director for Capital University, Dinner Theatres Inc., Cincinnati Footlighters, Cincinnati Choral Society, Cincinnati's Showboat Majestic, Players Theatre of Columbus, and Marjorie Lawrence Opera Theatre among others. He also was the regional artistic director for Murder Mystery Players overseeing productions in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, DC, New York and Michigan. He received a recent CityBeat nomination for his performance as John/James in Cincinnati Public Theatre's *Love, Valor, Compassion* and an Irene Ryan Award nomination for Ozzie in *Sticks and Bones*. In his offstage time, Bill is an avid bridge player as well as a fiber artist.

WHO'S WHO



Charmien Byrd (Sylvie / Dance Captain)

Charmien is honoured to get to perform at the beautiful and historic Sorg Opera House. She was most recently seen producing two live-streamed cabarets at the Springboro Performing Arts Center and being a vocalist/actor at Kings Island. After graduating from Ohio University in 2019, she has since appeared Off-Broadway several times, including *54 Sings Bo Burnham Volume 2* (54 Below), young Krystyna in *History of Now* (SoHo Playhouse), and originating the roles of Kate in *You Are Not Alone* (Gene Frankel Theatre) and Gluttony in *Infernal the Musical* (Theater 555). She has also toured as a Michael Jackson backup dancer for impersonator *MJDejaVu*. Other recent favourite roles include Molly Jensen in *Ghost the Musical* and Rapunzel in *Into The Woods* (La Comedia Dinner Theatre). Charmien would like to thank her husband, her family, friends, and God for all their love and support. - www.charmienbyrd.com



Steve Deckman (Efram)

This is only Steve's second appearance onstage, with his lone previous credit being *Murder on the Orient Express* (Samuel Ratchett). He has always been a huge fan of the theatre and is beyond thrilled to learn alongside this amazing cast and crew. He is now in the third act of his professional life: Act One was serving as a Naval Submarine Officer; Act Two was working as a Financial Services Executive with GE Capital and Synchrony Bank; and Act Three is supporting the Springboro and Lebanon schools as a substitute teacher during semi-retirement. He would like to thank his wonderful wife, Amy, and his three grown children, Haley, Andy, and Hope, for their loving support and unending patience, and he hopes you enjoy our show!



Jocelyn Wright (Carmen)

Jocelyn is a Middletown native and friend of the Sorg Opera House. This is her third show and second time performing with MLT. She is honored to be a part of The Nance and share this striking story with you. Enjoy!



Zella Younce (Joan)

Zella is ecstatic to be in her first production with MLT in the renowned Sorg Opera House! Previous credits include Sinclair Theatre's student-led *The Game* (The Girl) and a magic mouse in *'Twas: A Holiday Musical*. She is entering her final year as a Theatre Performance major at Sinclair and plans to continue her acting studies. Outside of theatre, she spends her time singing, dancing, studying Czech, or spinning on aerial silks.

THE CAST

(In Alphabetical Order)

Heather Adams as Rose
Brock Bornhorst as Ned
Bill Brewer as Chauncey Miles
Charmien Byrd as Sylvie
Steve Deckman as Efram
Jocelyn Wright as Carmen
Zella Younce as Joan

THE BAND

Jay Mills	Conductor / Keyboard
Mary Grace Griffith	Drums / Percussion
Evan Kershaw	Reeds
BenYobi	Trumpet

PLEASE NOTE:

The playwright has chosen to include adult language in the dialogue of this play.

Please turn off your cell phone, beeper, watch alarm or anything else that might make a noise during the performance. Unwrap any candies, cough drops, or mints before the performance begins to avoid disturbing your fellow audience members or the actors on stage.

The videotaping or making of electronic or other audio and/or visual recordings of this production and distributing recordings or streams in any medium, including the internet, is strictly prohibited, a violation of the Author(s)'s rights and actionable under the United States Copyright Law.

SCENES

Time: 1937 - Place: New York City

ACT I

Scene 1 - “Meet you Round the Corner”

An Automat - January 14th

Scene 2 - “Peace & Quiet”

Chauncey’s Apartment - January 15th

Scene 3 - “Stranger with a Kind Face”

The Irving Place Theatre - February 14th

Scene 4 - “Signature Number”

Chauncey’s Apartment - March 2nd

Scene 5 - “I’ve Created a Monster”

The Irving Place Theatre - April 16th

- INTERMISSION -

15 Minuets

ACT II

Scene 1 - “Trial and Error”

- April 17th

Scene 2 - “The Showdown”

The Irving Place Theatre - April 20th

Scene 3 - “In One”

Chauncey’s Apartment - April 25th

Scene 4 - “A Little Something on the Side”

Chauncey & Ned’s Apartment - April 27th

Scene 5 - “A Fallen Woman”

The Automat - April 29th

Scene 6 - “Big Finish”

The Irving Place Theatre - May 3rd

WHO'S WHO

Abbie Miller (Choreography)

Abbie was the Choreographer for *You're A Good Many*, *Charley Brown*, Co-Director of MLT's production of *Seussical!* The Assistant Director for *Children's Letters to God* and was the Assistant Director and played the role of Lucinda In MLT's *Into The Woods*, She also the Vocal Director and Choreographer for *Little Shop of Horrors*. Other MLT productions include: *The Thanksgiving Play*, *String of Pearls*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Gift of the Magi*, *The Last Five Years*, *SNAPSHOTS: A Musical Scrapbook* and many more. She has also been seen in *Company* at Beaver Creek Community Theatre and *Guys and Dolls*, *She Loves Me*, and *The Bridges of Madison County* with Lebanon Theatre Company. Abbie spent a year touring the US and Canada with Missoula Children's Theatre of Missoula, MT, and has been the theatre director at Lakota Plains Junior School for 10 seasons.

Megan Rehberg (Hair & Wig Design)

Megan is thrilled to be working with MLT again to support this incredible show! Selected wig design credits include *Hadestown*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Singin' in the Rain*, *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, and *Into the Woods*. You've seen her on stage at MLT in *Fix Me*, *Jesus*, *Church and State*, *Sunday in the Park with George*, and *Into the Woods*.

Gail Rudolph (Costume Design)

Gail is thrilled to be back with MLT at the Sorg. Gail has been active in community theater for 29 years and many of those working with MLT mostly on stage. This is Gail's third time costuming for MLT. Previously, she worked on *Suessical* and *Rehearsal for Murder*. Other costuming credits include; *Man of La Mancha*, *A Grand Night for Singing*, *The King and I*, and *Hayfever* for Mason Community Players.(MCP) Gail has performed , directed, produced, done props and set decor. Her work both on stage and behind the scenes have been recognized with many Orchid awards. She looks forward to directing *The Cover of Life* next spring for MCP. Thanks to Charley, Edwin, and this talented cast. As always, thanks to her husband, Rich for supporting her theater obsession.

WHO'S WHO

Charley Shafor (Director/Scenic & Costume Design)

Charley has been fortunate to spend his entire adult life in the arts. He began as a performer but soon discovered that his strengths and passions were best used behind the scenes. Starting his career as a scenic artist and designer, his work has appeared on stages across Ohio with companies including Middletown Summer Youth Theatre, LaComedia Dinner Theatre, The MUSE Machine, The Human Race Theatre Company, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, and Weathervane Playhouse. He also served twice as a guest artist for the University of Iowa's Summer Playwrights Festival and contributed to several productions at the Fireside Playhouse in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin.

His career expanded to Regional LORT theatres such as George Street Playhouse, Crossroads Theatre, and the McCarter Theatre Center in New Jersey; Circle Repertory, Playwrights Horizons, and Manhattan Theatre Club in New York City; Ogunquit Playhouse in Maine; and The Goodspeed Opera House in East Haddam, Connecticut. At Goodspeed, he worked on the original Annie II, later re-titled Annie Warbucks, with Composer Charles Strouse and Director Martin Charnin. He also built specialty costumes for the 90's revival of Pal Joey, featuring Peter Reardon and Florence Lacey. His work traveled to London's West End with The Fields of Ambrosia by Martin Silvestri and Joel Higgins, starring Broadway veteran Christine Andreas.

Beyond theatre, Charley has created art installations for NCR Corporation, The Reynolds & Reynolds Company, and Johnson & Johnson World Headquarters. Before returning to Ohio, he spent seven years on the faculty of Tower Hill School, a private Pre-K through 12 college preparatory school in Wilmington, Delaware. There he developed curriculum, taught American Musical Theatre and technical theatre, and collaborated across departments to produce multimedia arts events.

He credits his career and good fortune to the unwavering support of his family and his husband, Edwin Toy. Charley is also grateful to his entire family for the support they have shown throughout his career

Edwin Toy (Lighting & Sound Design)

Over the past 18 years, Edwin has designed over 100 productions for MLT. Locally, his design work has also been seen at Lebanon Theatre Company. Prior design experiences has taken him up and down the east coast where he spent eight years as resident lighting designer for The Pierre S. du Pont Arts Center in Wilmington, DE. He has also worked with St. Michael's Playhouse (Winooski, VT), Ogunquit Playhouse (Ogunquit, ME), Thalian Hall Center for the Performing Arts (Wilmington, NC), and Skyward Productions (Washington, DC).

NEXT ON STAGE



Book by Roger O. Hirson
Music & Lyric by Stephen Schwartz
Stage & Vocal Direction by Ryan Heinrich
Choreography by Trevor Downey

July 31st - August 2nd

All Tickets \$20.00 + processing fees - General Seating

Pippin is a bold, theatrical musical that follows a young prince on his quest to find purpose and meaning in life. Guided and manipulated by a mysterious troupe of performers and their charismatic Leading Player, Pippin tries everything from war to love to revolution, searching for his “corner of the sky.” With a dazzling score by Stephen Schwartz and a story that blends spectacle, satire, and soul-searching, Pippin is a high-energy journey through fantasy and reality that dares its hero and its audience to ask what truly makes a life extraordinary. This show deals with mature themes, war, and death. Recommended for 13+



This production sponsored in part by



PIPPIN is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI)
All authorized performance materials also provided by MTI www.mtishows.com

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Martha Oches
Barb Orth
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Thank You!

We are always grateful to our donors for their generous support, and we are equally grateful to everyone who purchases a season ticket package. Whether you choose to donate or become a season ticket holder, your commitment helps ensure we have the foundational financial support needed to produce an entire season of theatre.

Thank you to each and every one of you for believing in the work we do.

We do our best to recognize everyone accurately when printing names, but mistakes can happen. If you notice an error or have a question, please contact us at contact@middletownlyric.org.

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The Middletown Community Foundation, the Miriam Knoll Foundation, the Barnitz Fund, and the congregation of the First United Methodist church have all been instrumental in the success of this concert series, now in its 20th year of bringing music to our community!



JULY 3 **MY BROTHER'S KEEPER**

The boys are BACK! One of our most popular groups in the long history of First Fridays returns once again! Get your 4th of July holiday off to a great start with this group that has so much energy you'll think you just saw a fireworks display!



AUGUST 7 **NATIVE AMERICAN FLUTE**

Discover the tranquil beauty of the Native American flute as Janice T. (Sunflower) plays, displays, and tells the histories of her collection of Plains-style Native Flutes. The acoustics of our sanctuary are the perfect venue for experiencing these unique and wonderful instruments.

Les & Cheryl Landen Scholarship



Les and Cheryl Landen were lifelong Middletown residents, Middletown High School graduates, and devoted members of Middletown Lyric Theatre from its earliest days. Both believed deeply in the power of the arts and in the importance of education. Les was most often found onstage or designing and directing productions, while Cheryl worked behind the scenes; constructing, designing, helping with the box office and any other area that needed attention.

Their dedication extended far beyond the theatre. Les and Cheryl gave countless hours as volunteers for MidFest, the Ohio Hot Air Balloon Challenge, and numerous fundraising events. Their longest and most beloved service was to Light Up Middletown, where Les portrayed Santa Claus for many years and Cheryl served as Secretary, planner, and advertising coordinator.

Cheryl, a graduate of Transylvania University, taught in Middletown City Schools before opening her own business. After the birth of their sons, Scott and Alex, she became a full-time mother and continued her pattern of service—volunteering for the school system, Holy Family Parish, and several other community organizations. She also was on staff for the Middletown Art Center for many years

Les taught at Middletown High School before earning his law degree from the University of Dayton. He went on to serve the City of Middletown for nearly three decades as Law Director while also teaching Business Law at Miami University Middletown and Hamilton campuses. An avid golfer and a man of many talents, he poured his energy into every corner of the community he loved.

Together, Les and Cheryl championed education through the arts, believing that creativity strengthens both individuals and communities. In their honor, the Les & Cheryl Landen Scholarship provides an annual one-time award to a Middletown High School graduate pursuing education, with preference given to students entering the arts—music, drama, or visual art.

If you would like to support the arts, education, and the legacy of service embodied by Les and Cheryl, you may use QR code provided to make a donation to this or any of the valuable scholarships offered through the Middletown Community Foundation.

