

Theatre Arts Club

By Lauren McGregor



Theatre Arts Club began in 1910 and is, club members believe, the oldest surviving women's theater group in the country.

"It started as a creative outlet for wives of wealthy businessmen," says member Isabelle Donnelly. "It was very exclusive."

For the first 15 years, performances were held in several locations. In 1925, The Players built their stunning Jefferson Ave. Playhouse and invited Theatre Arts Club to produce its shows there. It has been home to the group ever since.

A proudly inclusive club today, Theatre Arts Club is committed to continuing its legacy of women on stage.

"We are seeking new members," says Donnelly. "Younger women, as well, to carry

on the legacy." Membership is \$75 per year.

"Members are invited to be as involved as they like," says Donnelly. "You don't have to act. You can paint scenery, build sets, sew costumes, volunteer at the entrance table or bar on performance nights." The roles are endless.

"I was a newly single mom and I fell in love with the organization," says President Jackie Canny of Grosse Pointe. "We laugh a lot, but we get stuff done."

In addition to theater, there are a slew of social activities, about one to three per month. From a book club and writing group to ladies' nights out and picnics, it's an organization based on love of theater as well as camaraderie.

"Come see us this October! Have a night out at the beautiful Players Playhouse," says Canny. "Bring your own food and drink. Or visit our donation-only wine bar."

The fall 2022 production is *Hallelujah Girls*, Oct. 21-22. Tickets are \$25 per person or free to members.

All proceeds go to the Eva Woodbridge Victor Scholarship Fund. Upon her death in 1952, Victor bequeathed a monetary gift to Theatre Arts Club to be used for scholarships. Every year since, the scholarship has been awarded to an outstanding female drama student at Wayne State University.

"Several recipients have gone on to Hollywood and Broadway," says Canny.

Rehearsals take place at Grosse Pointe Community Church. "The church and Pastor Richard Yeager-Stiver have been wonderful supporters," says Canny.


Pointers will see lots of familiar faces at Theatre Arts Club productions. And they are always invited to join the camaraderie.

"Did you wish you were in that play in high school? Do you regret never getting involved in theater?" asks Donnelly.

"Come join us now!"

And who knows? You might find a group of lifelong friends. "I found my tribe, my people," says Canny. "They are creative, intelligent and very welcoming."

Learn more at theatreartsclub.com. To join, visit the website, click 'applications,' select TAC representative and fill out the application. Members who join by Oct. 15 get free admission to the play.

For questions, please call Jackie Canny at (313) 378-9897. 

Clockwise from top left, after-show socializing; Spring 2021's *The Deer and the Antelope Play*; Isabelle Donnelly; audience at a Theatre Arts Club performance; social outing with Donna Ridella, Erin Ann Conway-DiSante, Lisa Lechniak, Mary Stelmark and President Jackie Canny

Photos by Marianne Shrader, courtesy of Theatre Arts Club