



STAGES

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ENGLERT THEATRE

Fall 2018

In Conversation with Troy Powell, Artistic Director of Ailey II

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AILEY'S REPERTORY ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR AHEAD OF THE
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Cover photo by Zak Neumann
Closet Witch performs at the Underground Showcase during Mission Creek Festival 2018

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Welcome to The Englert Theatre

Outside of the restaurant, rain covered the streets and sidewalks of downtown Indianapolis. We sat inside, still wet from journeying across several blocks in the downpour. It was our last night in town and we were exhausted from the Arts Midwest conference we had been attending — a few days of endless meetings with colleagues from across the field. But we were energized too. These moments of refuge and candid discussion with our far and near network were an important element of conferences — the warm, intimate analog to brightly lit conference halls.

We discussed, among other items, the riveting topic of grant fulfillment. One colleague referred to an arts organization that had been awarded a significant amount of funds for a community engagement grant. The multi-year project for which those funds had been awarded had, so far, failed to materialize. I don't know the entire story so it's difficult for me to assess why the grant didn't work; but the fact that considerable dollars had been set aside and that a group of caring arts administrators were unable to transform that funding into a well-received experience for its community sparked numerous questions about the granting process. Like: why does it require so much work to apply for, execute, and report on grants? Given the human resources needed to pursue grants, aren't they immediately more accessible to larger, better-funded organizations than smaller entities? Is that fair? Does that deepen urban/rural divides? And *if* community engagement is the focus of a grant, what happens to that community when the dollars run out - does the engagement cease to occur?

Grantee accountability is clearly a concern for any granting entity — particularly if it is publicly funded - but how can grants strike a better balance between ensuring the applicants can actually support the work while also not creating so much additional work for time-strapped staff members that applying for and reporting on the grant becomes cumbersome, even disruptive to their other work duties. On multiple occasions I have placed moratoriums on new grants for the Englert development department because we don't have enough time to manage the process — which is discouraging. Researching, writing, and submitting an application for something that we might not receive doesn't always make sense when weighed against spending one-on-one time listening to local donors and businesses who might invest in our organization's mission, people for whom our work has immediate impact and value.

In a recent meeting with a prospective donor, I was appropriately grilled about whether the work of the Englert was really about "community engagement" or if we were just checking the boxes donors and grantors want to see. I said, "This is decades-long work. Nothing is overnight." What I meant is that community engagement - or rather: community building - is long-term work reflected by an organization's philosophy and the commitment of its staff to be in thorough, consistent conversation with the various kinds of people in its region. Big projects and loud splashes are fine but they are not the core of what real community building through the arts looks like. It is ongoing relationship building, the endless quest of helping one's actual city feel like home for all who live there. And yet, grant funds — perhaps by design — seem to so often arrive in temporary bursts tied to one event or a series of events. So what happens when the granting period is over? Does the community engagement project disappear? Should grants require longevity as one of their key outcomes?

One of my colleagues at the restaurant in Indianapolis raised their drink to the sky and speaking to an imaginary grantor in the room said, "Trust us. Let us do the work. This is what we do." We laughed because we understood the core of the toast: help us do the work, don't make it harder. Despite the tension, it's likely that staff at most arts organizations and most granting entities are more aligned than not. In order to improve the process what might be needed is a real, ongoing conversation between the grantors and the grantees - the same kind of engagement that arts presenters should be pursuing with the different kinds of people who live in their towns.

Sincerely,
Andre Perry

Executive Director

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Ailey II: Interview with Troy Powell, Artistic Director

DAN BOSCALJON



Photo by Kyle Frohman.

In a rare opportunity, the Englert will host contemporary and modern dance ensemble Ailey II, a company that features a dozen of the country's most talented young dancers (between 21 and 24 years of age). Ailey II, co-presented with Nolte Academy, performs at the Englert on Sunday, November 4 at 6 p.m. Ailey II has been developing and promoting America's top dance talents since 1974, beginning as the Alvin Ailey Repertory Ensemble under the artistic direction of Sylvia Waters. I had the privilege of speaking to Troy Powell, who took over the duties of artistic director in 2012. — Daniel Boscaljon

What is the role of artistic director? How does it differ from an orchestral conductor or the director of a play or film? What's been the most exciting part of this job?

An artistic director wears many hats. I'm responsible for nurturing and grooming these young artists artistically, whatever their

artistic vision is, to watch them grow as dancers and artists — but as people as well [and to get them to] a point where they're connected and confident in who they are as human beings. Another one of my responsibilities is to bring in choreographers who will challenge the dancers technically and psychologically. I also hire the dancers...and try to get dancers the best jobs possible. It also helps me ground as a human being — I'm responsible for these young dancers, so I'm learning about myself as well.

I know that you also have done choreography of your own: how does being artistic director build upon but differ from that type of work?

When I first came onboard, I was choreographer. I was creating works for

eight or nine years, and when I became AD I took a hiatus — I just created a duet this summer on the dancers that will be premiered this season. It's not a responsibility with the job, but it's part of it.

Describe the differences separating modes of dance — from classical to jazz to modern to contemporary. What do you think has been gained in the evolution of dance styles?

We do everything — we try to have a wide range of different styles. Mr. Ailey thought it was a great idea for his dancers to know everything from ballet to jazz to hip-hop to contemporary because it helps a dancer in the long run. Some dancers and choreographers these days do it all. When I was trained, you had to sing, dance and act, but now, dancers really need to know all kinds of dance, because so many choreographers do everything.

Our base technique is the Horton technique — it's modern. It strengthens the dancer, and it is a beautiful technique. You can distinguish an Ailey from anyone else because of that ground in modern dance. Lester Horton was interested in Egyptian and Arabic shapes — squares, things parallel. It looks seamless as you're doing choreography. You see the technique, but also the work as the dancers are moving. The way Mr. Ailey approached it — it was not a static genre, but a technique that flows through movement and it has been around so long that people recognize it.

What is it that makes dance an art form, rather than another version of athletics, like gymnastics? What kinds of things do dancers capture that other art forms don't?

It's conversations with our bodies. We tell stories with our physique, which people are connected with when we perform, or are in rehearsal. We're not vocal, but we are moving and are having conversations. Dance is unique in that sense — we're able to transform a story or conversation that we express to an audience. It makes us feel good, releasing what our bodies want to express. Mr. Ailey talked about it as storytelling: you're an actor, you're a singer, you're moving through your body as you tell different stories (personal experiences, something you imagined, something that you have seen or experienced recently or in the past). This can transform people, it moves

people.

What kinds of questions are you able to explore in dance? What is it that you think this year's performances capture particularly well?

Dance is an art form, but it's definitely something that has to come from an honest place. We have to be honest to ourselves before we can be honest with [other] people. We don't just do steps. When choreographers teach steps, we don't just do that. We approach things in a humanistic way. Doing steps becomes boring...even if that is your approach, as opposed to it being more like music or voice or theater where there is that fluid flow of storytelling. Dance has questions — but dance has true answers. You know the artistic approach that you take when you are dancing because every time you hit the stage, it is different. I never premeditated a performance or rehearsal because each time I performed was different. The costumers and audience and energy and adrenaline pops out of your body, and you have no control over what your body is telling you; you know the steps and the choreography, but it's totally different when you reach the stage.

As someone who has danced, and now observes dancers, what kinds of things do you watch for to evaluate what separates a great dancer from one who is merely good?

We look for dancers that are strong, who can live up to the choreography, but we're also looking for people who are willing to open themselves as individuals. You can see someone audition who is special, someone we can work with. Most of them are good, but we want those who bring artistic freedom and artistic choice. You do have a few that catch your eye, and 9 times out of 10, those are the ones who are hungry and passionate. The people that catch your eye, they're a little more hungry and not too analytical. They're more free and want to tell their story in a more passionate way.

When you see that special dancer, what in the body shows that specialness?

The face — it's about their expression and how they approach the movement and how that expression in the face trembles down to their

bodies, powerful and also vulnerable, which is a strong attribute to have as well. You can tell by the way they move — they overextend, they go for it more by their approach. It is sometimes at 1000%. It is freedom, and they have a sense of being free or liberated and they're not afraid to take chances or risks.

How often do you still dance? How often do you perform? What has changed in your relation to dance?

I don't dance full time anymore, but I can when I'm demonstrating. It's healthy for me to move. I take class now and then. Not often enough, but I'll get back into it. I miss it. Sometimes I'll break out a step or two at home.

"IT'S CONVERSATIONS WITH OUR BODIES. WE TELL STORIES WITH OUR PHYSIQUE, WHICH PEOPLE ARE CONNECTED WITH WHEN WE PERFORM, OR ARE IN REHEARSAL. WE'RE NOT VOCAL, BUT WE ARE MOVING AND ARE HAVING CONVERSATIONS."

I miss performing. I was with both companies. As artistic director of Ailey II, being with these kids all the time, I miss it, especially performing Ailey works. What I'm trying to do as artistic director is to take what I learned and bring it to this generation as far prioritizing a sense of community and togetherness, a sense that we are all one. I'm trying to bring what Mr. Ailey said in the 60's — dance came from the people and should be delivered back to the people in the most honest way. A lot is going on in the world today, and one of our new pieces talks about togetherness as a response to that. Dancing is an outlet to heal yourself and to heal one another. With social media, we're texting and communicating and we have instant gratification. When I performed, we had no phones. We were getting to know

each other in our personal lives. We saw each other's facial expressions, looked each other in the eye. I still have friends I worked with 30 years ago that are best friends of mine today.

What advice would you have for audience members for whom this would be their first dance performance? What kinds of things would let someone appreciate and even enjoy it, if it is something new?

When we come to Iowa City, we're doing four pieces, a range of programs. I like to encourage audiences and tell audiences to be open. Take this performance and let it change your perspective on Ailey dancers. We like for our audiences to enjoy our work — we want to connect.

Our best audience members are those who don't see dance. With Ailey, we cover everything from lighting to music to costumes to choreography. We get people who are into sports, or a lawyer or construction worker who has never seen dance in this way. We touch people with what they do, with our work, so everyone can relate—no matter your age or color or beliefs. Mr. Ailey always said: even if you don't like the choreography, close your eyes and listen to the music or pay attention to the costumes. Non-dancers are more curious, and they go home asking themselves questions and giving themselves answers.

Ailey II is sponsored by Graduate Iowa City and The Catalano Family Fund at the Community Foundation of Johnson County.

Other individual donors to this program include John & Ellen Buchanan, Wally & Karen Chappell, Sandra Eskin, Robert & Karlen Fellows, Jo & Phillip Jones, Charles & Connie Funk, Kenneth K. Kinsey Family Foundation, John S. & Patricia C. Koza, Casey Mahon, Monica Moen, Carrie Norton, Rockwell Collins Matching Gift Program, Dick & Joyce Summerwill, and Gary & LaDonna Wicklund (as of 10.18.18).

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Staff Spotlight: Pete Becker

DAN BOSCALJON

Monitor Engineer Pete Becker works with Englert artists onstage to ensure that they can properly hear their own performance. Pete also produces and engineers records with musicians at Magic Barn Studios in Solon, Iowa, provides audio forensics for a New York-based copyright law firm, and handles the restoration and remastering of vintage recordings for Tuff City Records, a vinyl record reissue label also based in New York.

What is a monitor engineer? What things in particular do you do or need to think about when a show is going on? What about the work is interesting to you? What's the creative element involved?

Most live music venues are typically divided into two separate worlds of sound — what the band hears onstage and then what the audience hears in the house. In some respects they are two very different things that are occurring simultaneously. Perhaps the lead singer would only like to hear themselves and the piano player because hearing the lead guitarist might be too much of a distraction that could prevent a more perfect vocal performance during a challenging or complex harmony section of a song. Perhaps the drummer would only like to hear the bass and guitar

players and a small amount of the lead singer to do what it is they do best during the performance. To make things more complex, it isn't uncommon to have eight to ten entirely different examples of these specific sonic arrangements going on all at the same time in different locations on the stage. Additionally, all of those locations need to sound pleasing for the performer to enjoy their time onstage and create for the audience the best music that they can. Most importantly, this means no feedback allowed. **Ever.** That's where some science and math come into play but I won't bore the reader here with all of those details. It is the job of the monitor engineer to work closely with the artists during sound check in order to ensure that all of these things are prepared and double checked thoroughly before they take the stage for that evening's performance.

It can be a very similar experience to producing music in the recording studio, something I've been doing as my primary artistic passion for almost 20 years now. Working closely with artists to sculpt the sound of their craft with them is a very intimate endeavor to consider, and it is important that they feel comfortable in their surroundings in order to be creatively free to emotionally express themselves for the



Monitor Engineer Pete Becker works during a changeover during William Elliott Whitmore's 2014 Mission Creek Festival show. Photo by Bill Adams



The Neve recording console came from the famous Magic Shop recording studio in New York City, which closed in 2016 and was used to record David Bowie's final album "Blackstar," as well as albums of artists such as Lou Reed, Suzanne Vega and Duran Duran. Photo courtesy of Pete Becker

eagerly awaiting audience of fans. To do this successfully means hopefully making fast friends with a small group of people for a short period of time.

What's the difference between engineering sound live for a performance rather than as a recording? What different things do you listen for?

Being a live sound engineer mostly has to do with helping an artist present to an audience something that they have already creatively formed during a previous period of time in a recording studio with their producer — if there happens to be one. In that sense, engineering live sound doesn't have quite the same kind of creative collaboration, let's say, as the recording process usually does in the studio environment.

For me, as a producer/engineer in the studio, at one moment I might be playing the tambourine part on a song, and then helping someone complete the writing of a melody line at another moment, and later in the process I'll be editing together all of the many recorded performances into a cohesive narrative, which is almost like painting with sound. So very much a creative and collaborative experience. That being said, to be an audio engineer in either environment means you are deciding what microphones are going to be used and where they are going to be placed and you are using similar tools to carve out how the sound is going to be perceived by the audience or listener.

Why do you think it is still vital for musicians to record in a studio, using old equipment, in a world where artists are releasing music recorded on iPads? What do you add to it?

There is a growing sector of the music recording industry that fully embraces and far prefers to use the analog technologies of yesteryear when capturing music. When

you use vintage analog tape machines and recording consoles correctly — though it takes quite a bit more time and skill — the sonic rewards are simply stunning. The musical tones they can produce are full of beautiful emotional content and quite literally command hair-raising moments during the listening experience. At Magic Barn Studios this is definitely our ethos, and we are extremely fortunate to be working with what is widely considered to be one of the most historically significant and unique sounding recording consoles on the planet. It was one that was custom designed and built by Rupert Neve (The Godfather of Recording Consoles) in 1970 for the BBC in London before having an illustrious three decade existence in New York City recording the likes of David Bowie, Lou Reed, The Ramones, Blondie. The list of legendary artists who preferred to use it is incredibly long, and judging from the way it has been sounding while we have been recently producing records for numerous Iowa City and nationally touring bands alike, it is easy to understand why. That we are now carrying its torch of musical pedigree and famed audio integrity right here in Iowa City's backyard is an absolute unbelievable honor that is hard to describe with words.

What kinds of things are you able to hear that you hope that audiences are able to notice and appreciate?

I suppose all of the subtle nuances of the artist's performance. Making sure that they can hear all of those little details in their own monitor system means that they can deliver them properly into the room - and from there, the front of house engineer, who is dialing in sounds for the audience to hear, can also do their job more effectively as well. It really is a team effort to make sure that all 800 of us are having a wonderfully enjoyable experience — performers, engineers, and audience members alike.



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Gregory Alan Isakov will return to the Englert stage on Saturday, November 3 at 8 p.m. with special guest Pieta Brown. Photo by Rebecca Caridad

Active Audiences III: Relieving Preconceptions

DAN BOSCALJON

I was thrilled when the Englert announced that Gregory Alan Isakov would be returning to play this fall—on reading the news, I smiled as I simultaneously remembered his 2016 appearance at the Englert. I remember the lighting of the stage—a halfmoon of lamps burning shoulder height—and hearing the swell of guitars that guided Isakov’s gentle voice from an almost whisper to its full crescendo. At the same time, I also know that this memory has been overwritten by my tendency to listen to his albums as I run. It’s impossible, from my vantage point in the present, not to mingle the two pasts into one glorious memory. Not only that, but as watching Wye Oak (for my second time!) during this year’s Mission Creek reminded me, if it is difficult to hear a performance a first time, it is even more difficult to not impose a past performance over a present one. Familiarity with a band, or multiple viewings of any kind of performance art, allows us to

remove ourselves from what is offered and to instead retreat into a space where we make judgments about better or worse.

Much in our culture rewards repetition: we watch sequels and reboots, we reread novels, we listen to a favorite song over and over again. One can do so with a lazy attitude, half-watching a movie for the fortieth time, allowing it to recede into the background; on the other hand, one can approach repetition as a way to gain a deepened understanding of the art experience. Some art can only be appreciated once the shock of its novelty has worn away.

Ironically, the initial appeal of seeing an artist play again—Isakov, in my case—is knowing that this performance could be unlike the last. New songs may be performed, or old favorites may be offered in a new way. Just as every poem only truly lives as it is read

"BECAUSE NO TRUE PERFORMANCE CAN EXACTLY RECREATE A FORMER VARIATION, AUDIENCES ARE ASKED TO ENGAGE IN A COMPLEX DYNAMIC—APPRECIATING WHAT A PERFORMANCE HAS IN COMMON WITH WHAT IS FAMILIAR WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY APPRECIATING DIVERGENCES."

aloud, with each reader's idiosyncratic interpretation alive in a breath, a pause, a pronunciation, so also does each song or each play exist only during the time it is performed — or witnessed. To watch a performance a second time therefore opens something like what one can gain through rereading a story or rescreening a film. However, because no true performance can exactly recreate a former variation, audiences are asked to engage in a complex dynamic — appreciating what a performance has in common with what is familiar while simultaneously appreciating divergences.

Some distinctions are minor — the intensity with which the drummer hits a cymbal on a song one night, the slightly slower speed at which a monologue is delivered on another. Other occasions, however, are more significant: a band changes the lyrics to a familiar song, or rearranges the song into a new work. In theater, this occurs when a director recontextualizes a familiar play into a different setting, or when an actress interprets a line or character differently than one had seen before. Lines are delivered with a greater understanding of a character, or a dancer has more energy and leaps from the stage with a greater fervor. Both accidental and intentional deviations have the power to open up

a performance in a whole new way, for someone in the audience or for the performer.

From an artist's perspective, such re-examinations are part of the artistic process. The truth of art is something malleable, and artists will often admit to needing to continue to learn from the song what it is through a series of performances. Just as static art objects — photographs, paintings, sculptures — tend to provide rich layers of meaning to new witnesses in new times, so also do performative art pieces change over time. One advantage of performative art is that its pieces can continue to teach the performer what it is, slowly, as though the artist were a block of granite that needed to be chipped away by a role, or a song, until finally the truth could be told, allowed.

Problematically, if it is difficult enough to see a live performance a first time (given the occasional person nearby who sings along to the wrong song, or who simply is too tall to see around), it is even more difficult to see a performance twice. We impose onto each new performance the ghosts of our previous encounters, with preconceptions that tend to frame — and too often dominate — the events we witness. In doing so, we obscure the actual sense of now that the performance provides with a sense of then: the remembered times we have seen a play or heard a song before. We use performances to reaffirm memories of our judgments (such as: "this actor is amazing!") instead of creating new ones. To some extent, my excitement to see Isakov play will be anchored in my fond memories of the last time. Those very memories will interpose themselves on what I experience in the moment, such that I will attempt to simultaneously relive the past and embrace the present — ultimately doing neither. Familiarity with a performance piece can blind and deafen us to the novelty and magic of a performance within the moment itself.

We carry within us those performances that transform us beyond even our awareness that this is so. Art tends to

speak to our bodies and souls in ways that we cannot appreciate, much less remember. We therefore become the truth of the art we experience and carry it as part of our lives, and thus experience deviations from the truth that we realized was communicated in a phrase, a glance, or a song as heretical. This shock, too, distracts us from the moment in which something new, never seen before in the universe, is being born.

Perhaps awareness, offered through a combination of wisdom and experience, is the best way to avoid not seeing a performer for the second time. Being aware of preconceptions and consciously placing them to the side provides one method for clearing space for something new. Alternatively, being aware of differences and changes, and thinking through how it opens up the performance, can make being a repeat member of an artist's (or piece's) audience a rich, dynamic experience. Put concretely, my goal is to see Isakov perform as though it were for the very first time, not expecting any song or anything, receiving all that is offered with gratitude, and learning anew what possibilities his art opens to the world.

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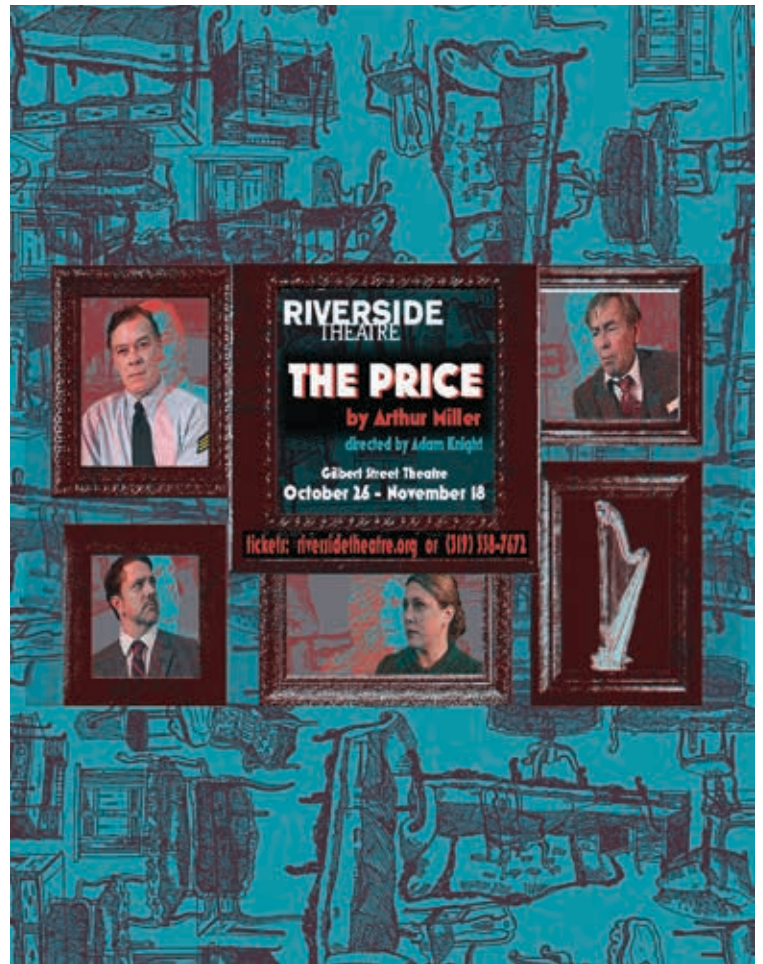
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SINCE 1854

the knot  



Screenwriters, and University of Iowa graduates, Scott Beck and Bryan Woods, prepare for an opening weekend screening of their smash hit *A Quiet Place*.

A letter from FilmScene

It's been five years since we at FilmScene opened our doors as Iowa City's nonprofit cinema. What emerged from an idea scrawled on scrap paper at a coffee shop — as all the good ideas are — has now shown over one thousand films and served nearly 200,000 moviegoers.

Our incredible Iowa City community has made indie cinema part of their regular practice, showing up every night of the year for movies that challenge as well as entertain.

No wonder, since the roots of FilmScene's accomplishments are found in the very same community that now grows inside our theaters.

It was our Iowa City community that responded to a city survey in 2011 and stated their number one downtown desire was a movie theater.

We introduced ourselves to the community through screenings in City Park's Shakespearean theater, churches and music venues. We banded with our campus community through a partnership with the University of Iowa Bijou Film Board in the belief that films are an integral part of understanding our world through film.

Our business community offered up proceeds from dinners, donuts by the dozen, hand-printed t-shirts and free advice. Our philanthropic community banded together as the Founders Circle, to generate seed money to take our first real steps.

And led by The Englert Theatre, it was our cultural community that advocated for another arts organization to join a busy downtown. Rather than skepticism and territorialism there was belief and cooperation.

From an idea that we could be "more than a movie theatre," to a cinema that now sends students abroad, teaches area students how to make films, and supports local films like *Saving Brinton*, FilmScene has grown from an idea to an essential. The Englert too has grown, proving that our fertile cultural soil can support a rich and diverse arts ecosystem.

Looking ahead to the next half decade, it will be these same principles of collaboration that move us forward. The next big thing is more of the same thing that got us here.

We will dream together—our organizations, all of us. We will program together. We will create together. We will build together. Our already great arts will continue to evolve by working together.

Only together.

And so on the eve of those next five years, on the eve of Thanksgiving, we are grateful, for the thing that moves us forward, for that which helps us grow, for that thing Iowa City seems to have in endless supply: community.

For tickets and current screenings, visit icfilmscene.org

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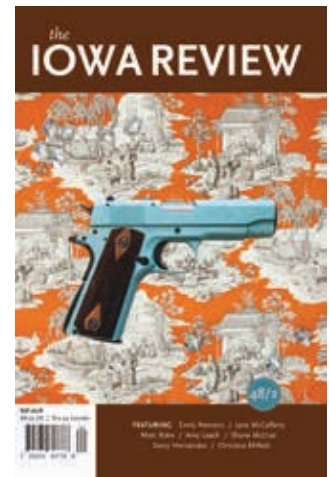
Night Stand

MARC RAHE

Ground divorces from ground and red from the heart
beneath the press that screws, with love, the apple
toward cider. Fragments are left of spectrum
when chlorophyll abandons the leaves, old

yellowing story. Selling dismisses
picking. A classic of skyrocketed
afternoon becomes lewd, interpreted.
Her favorite song from childhood dragged
through bong water by black light. Midnight, you
held me once through the lace veil interrupted
by actual touch. What made a recipe for
vinegar of if/then, therefore N, or

negative N. Sum, or its homonym.
Both cuffs are open beside the water.



Special thanks to the Iowa Review and Marc Rahe for allowing us this poem. Rahe's piece can be found in issue 48.2. Visit iowareview.org or Prairie Light's Bookstore to get your copy today!

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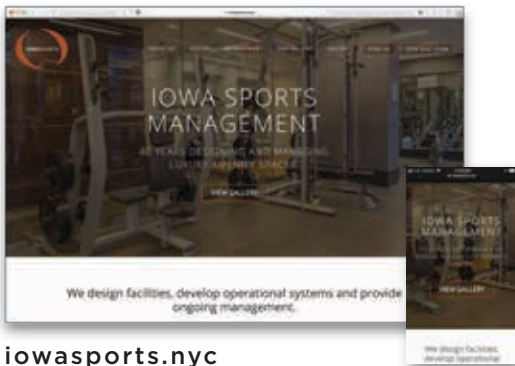
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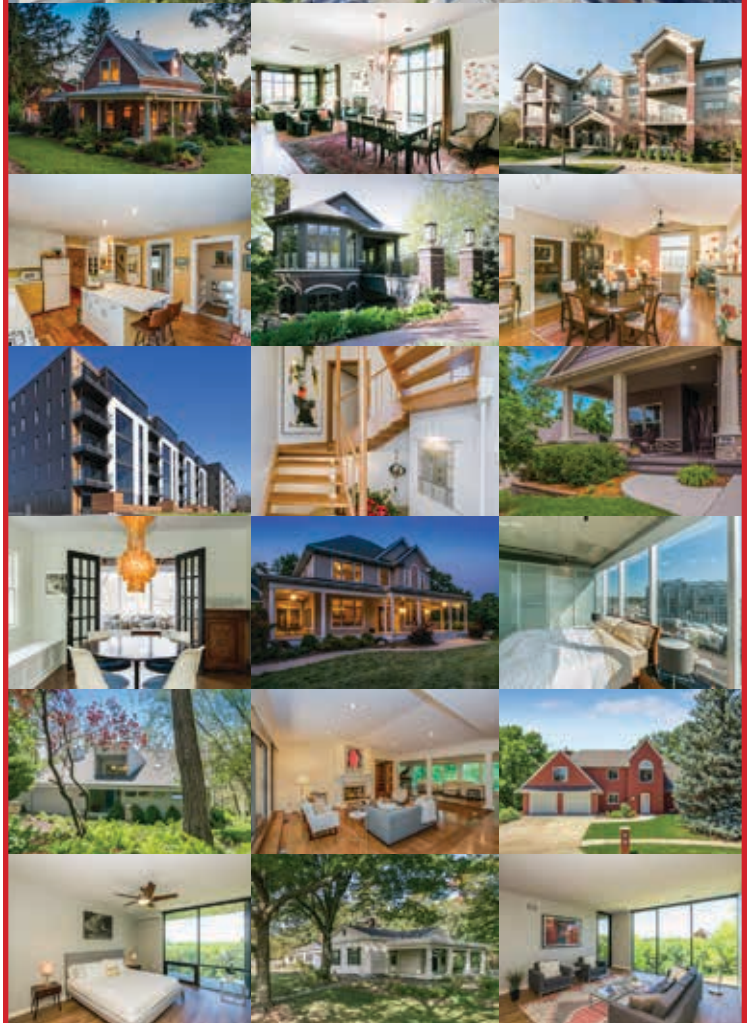


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Upcoming Events



CELESTE BARBER

November 17 at 8 p.m.
 \$25 - \$50*
 Reserved Seating
 Co-presented with
 T-Presents

In this exciting live show experience, actor, comedian, and social media superstar Celeste Barber recreates celebrity Instagram pics, magazine photos and product ads to highlight how far they fall from her reality as a mom and “normal” person. With two sons under the age of seven and two teenage stepdaughters, she knows a thing or two about parenting exhaustion and how to find humour in it. Her meteoric rise on Instagram parodying celebrity photographs has resulted in her taking meetings with top moguls of the entertainment industry and awkwardly becoming friends with the very people she is parodying. Barber explains the story behind some of her most famous images, her new relationship with famous people, and the stalkers, fans and comments that get under her skin.



THE NUTCRACKER

November 30 - December 2
 \$22 - \$38*
 Reserved Seating
 Co-presented with
 Nolte Academy
 Sponsored by Hills Bank
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The Englert Theatre and Nolte Academy are proud to present a new production of *The Nutcracker!* This holiday classic comes to life with performances by dancers from Nolte Academy. The production features a live orchestra, consisting of local musicians conducted by Carey Bostian. This year’s classic *Nutcracker* ballet features exquisite new costuming, enchanting new sets, and captivating new choreography under the direction of Nolte’s Interim Ballet Director and *Nutcracker* Artistic Director, Mauro Villanueva (formerly of *The Joffrey Ballet*), all while embracing the classic *Nutcracker* we have all grown to love.



A PHIL VASSAR CHRISTMAS

December 7 at 8 p.m.
 \$38.50 - \$68.50*
 Reserved Seating

Playing his holiday hits alongside the country hits of his career, Phil Vassar is a piano-pounding powerhouse on stage. One of a handful of musicians to have multiple hits as a songwriter and as an artist, Vassar has 10 Number 1s, 15 Top 10s, and 26 TOP 40s. His critically-acclaimed holiday release *Noel* included five original and five classic songs and a slight dose of irreverence. Sandwiched between “Away in a Manger” and “I’ll Be Home For Christmas,” “Santa’s Gone Hollywood” is an equal opportunity offender for everything good and pure about jolly ol’ Saint Nick.



NATIONAL THEATRE LIVE: ALLELUJAH!

December 16 at 2 p.m.
 \$15 - \$18*
 General Admission
 Sponsored by M.C. Ginsberg

Alan Bennett’s sharp and hilarious new play is “just what the doctor ordered” (*Daily Telegraph*). Filmed live at London’s Bridge Theatre during its limited run, don’t miss this acclaimed production full of “singalongs and stinging wit” (*The Guardian*). The Beth, an old fashioned cradle-to-grave hospital serving a town in Yorkshire, is threatened with closure as part of an efficiency drive. A documentary crew, eager to capture its fight for survival, follows the daily struggle to find beds on the Dusty Springfield Geriatric Ward, and the triumphs of the old people’s choir.



AN EVENING WITH DAWES

January 27 at 7 p.m.
\$40*
Reserved Seating

Over nearly a decade, Dawes has grown from their Southern California roots-rock sound that nodded to the past, to a modern blend of guitar-driven indie rock, slick grooves, blue-eyed SoCal soul, and modern folk. The band is touring with their sixth album, *Passwords*, which NPR Music dubbed a return to Dawes' "greatest specialty: smooth and ingratiating California folk-rock that never bothers to hide its big, beating, bleeding heart." This is a record about the modern world: the relationships that fill it, the politics that divide it, the small victories and big losses that give it shape. The album also embraces a spacier, experimental approach. Rarely has Dawes created such an appropriate soundtrack for the modern age.



THE FAB FOUR

February 13 at 7:30 p.m.
\$45 - \$65*
Reserved Seating

The Emmy award winning Fab Four is elevated far above every other Beatles tribute due to their precise attention to detail. With uncanny, note-for-note live renditions of Beatles' classics such as "Can't Buy Me Love," "Yesterday," "A Day In The Life," "Twist And Shout," "Here Comes The Sun," and "Hey Jude", the Fab Four will make you think you are watching the real thing. Their incredible stage performances include three costume changes representing every era of the Beatles ever-changing career, and this loving tribute to the Beatles has amazed audiences in countries around the world, including Japan, Australia, France, Hong Kong, The United Kingdom, Germany, Mexico and Brazil. The Fab Four is truly the ultimate tribute.



I'M WITH HER

February 28 at 8 p.m.
\$45*
Reserved Seating

Four years after their formation at an impromptu show in 2014, Sara Watkins, Sarah Jarosz and Aoife O'Donovan formed I'm With Her and released their debut album, *See You Around*, in February 2018. *See You Around* has garnered praise from NPR, who instantly hailed the collection as "willfully open-hearted" and *The Guardian* calling their sound both "ethereal and purposeful." Bound by a love for bluegrass, chamber music, jazz, storytelling and singing, I'm With Her have honed a special, family-like chemistry, garnering acclaim for their unique blend of instrumental interplay combined with their indelible harmonies. *The New York Times* describes, "...when the three women sang together, their voices became one instrument, sharing every breath."



ST. PAUL & THE BROKEN BONES

March 26 at 7:30 p.m.
\$44.50*
Reserved Seating

St. Paul & The Broken Bones formed in 2012, releasing their debut album *Half the City* in 2014 and its follow up, 2016's *Sea of Noise*, to much acclaim. Those strong efforts helped place them on the national scene, and the band worked hard to prove they were no mere retro-soul band, touring the world relentlessly, including opening for The Rolling Stones. Paul Janeway's fearless showmanship, thoughtful lyrics, and dedication to his performance has become the band's calling card, and paired with the inventive and skillful direction of co-band leader Jesse Phillips as well as a full eight-man roster comprised of some of the best young instrumentalists in the South, they are a must-see event.

*Ticket purchases may incur additional fees. For more information, please go to: englert.org/about/understanding-ticket-fees

Become a Friend

As a nonprofit theater, ticket sales and other earned income cover only a portion of our costs, and we need the help of community members like you. Donations to the Englert help support several aspects of operations including but not limited to outreach projects in our community, programming costs for artist performances and residencies, maintenance and preservation of our historic building, and capital improvement projects.

The Friends of the Englert program is our way to say thank you, providing donors of \$35 or more with priority access to tickets for in-demand shows, free and discounted ticket prices, and other Englert insider benefits and information. Contact the Box Office or visit bit.ly/englertfriends

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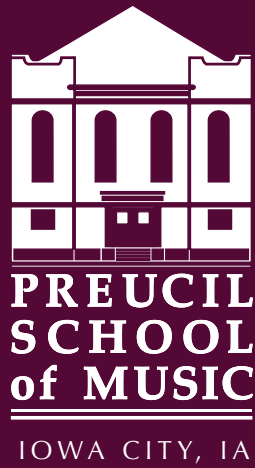
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EXITS

Emergency exits are located throughout the theater auditorium. Please identify the emergency exit closest to your seat and note that it may not be the door you entered through.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP

Our ushers are stationed at auditorium entrances. If you have any questions or concerns during your visit to The Englert Theatre please ask an usher. If they don't have the answer they will find the appropriate staff person to accommodate your needs.

STAY AWARE

Please remain aware of your surroundings and notify an usher or staff member if you notice anything that appears suspicious or out of place.

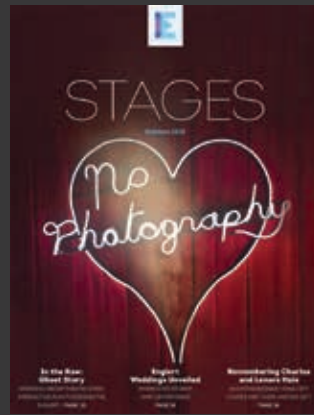
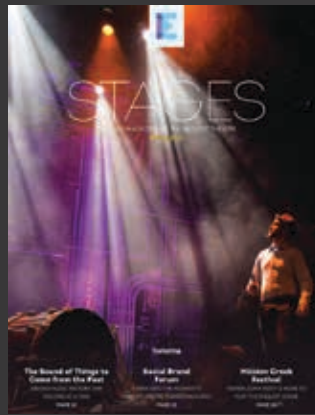
Above all, the use of common sense is key to the safety of everyone!

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

You will be directed to leave the building by the sounding alarm or by theatre personnel. When exiting, please proceed in an orderly and prompt fashion to a safe area away from the building. We request you convene at the pedestrian mall located west of the building. Theatre staff will announce updates on if and when it is safe to re-enter the building. ■

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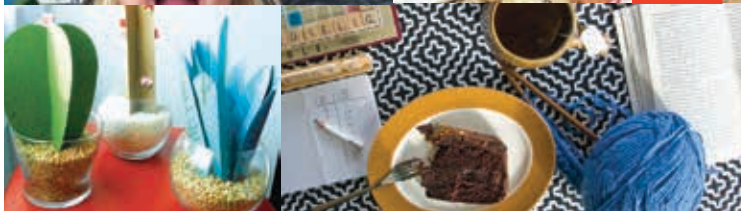
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Englert Commissions

The amount of creativity contained within the Iowa City area is astounding. Musicians, artists, writers, photographers, and more are abundant within the Corridor, adding to the flavor of this Midwest oasis of art and culture. The Englert Theatre wanted to highlight this talent and began offering collaborative opportunities to local artists, commissioning projects to commemorate Englert milestones, our ever-supportive community, and the city we call home.

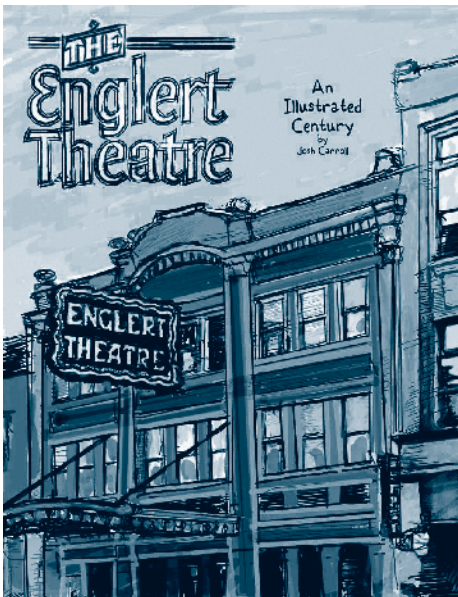


Iowa City Song Project

In celebration of its 100th birthday in 2012, The Englert Theatre commissioned 31 Iowan musicians and bands to write and record songs inspired by Iowa City. The result is the *Iowa City Song Project*, an album as diverse and cutting edge as the city itself. The album contains a spectrum of music from roots-rock to the avant-garde, bringing together a community of artists in a unique musical experience. Give it a listen at <https://soundcloud.com/englert>. CDs and LPs are available for purchase at the box office.

Englert at 100

Englert at 100 showcases Iowa City-based photographer Sandy Dyas' celebration of the Englert's centennial year. Her photos document Englert show days from bus arrivals to post-performance loadouts. Dyas was given full access behind the scenes, capturing performers warming up in the dressing rooms and Englert staff working their offstage magic, creating an artistic documentation of the theater's identity.



An Illustrated Century by Josh Carroll

Local artist Josh Carroll was commissioned to create a comic book documenting a century of Englert Theatre history including its 1912 Vaudeville origins, movie theatre heyday, and performing arts center reincarnation. This richly-illustrated timeline provides an engaging way to connect with the past and trace the journey of Iowa City's last remaining historic theater.

Poetry by Dora Malech

In 2014, the Englert celebrated its 10-year anniversary as a nonprofit. Celebrations included special performances, dinners, and commissioned work from poet and former Iowa City resident Dora Malech. The Englert commissioned Malech to write original poetry for the anniversary, celebrating the theme of gratitude. Without the efforts and continuing support of the community, the Englert wouldn't exist as it is today, and we are forever grateful to our donors, sponsors, patrons, and volunteers.



ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE 2014: Nat Baldwin

The Englert believes in supporting emerging and working artists and has created an Artist-in-Residence Program to allow artists time to work on their projects while experiencing and engaging with the Iowa Creative Corridor. Bassist/composer Nat Baldwin of the rock band Dirty Projectors was the first resident hosted in February 2014. Baldwin's residency included substantial time for him to work on new compositions as well as to engage with the Corridor community by conducting a songwriting workshop with students

IOWA CITY SONG PROJECT CDS AND LPS, ILLUSTRATED CENTURY BOOKS, AND PHOTOGRAPHY ARE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT THE BOX OFFICE AND AT SELECT SHOWS.

from Tate High School and visiting area cultural institutions with local artists.

Englert Beer Series

From Fall 2015 to Spring 2016, the Englert partnered with three local breweries to brew three original beers for the Englert Beer Series. Inspired by our past, present, and future, the original beers poured from the minds of brewers at Backpocket Brewing Company, Lion Bridge Brewing Company, and Big Grove Brewery. Backpocket's Riot of '84 Pre-Prohibition Lager was reminiscent of the beer likely made by John Englert at Iowa City's first brewery, and inspired by his hand in inciting the Beer Riots of 1884. Lion Bridge's Local Talent Robust Porter shines a spotlight on our mission of serving as a conduit between local and national scenes. Finally, Big Grove's Quantum Finish Hybrid-Style Double IPA is a funky beer aged in Cedar Ridge barrels with season citrus fruits, a true Corridor collaboration. Englert Beer Series beer may be available for purchase again in the future.

The Evolution of Bruno Littlemore

The Englert's first-ever, commissioned original stage play, *The Evolution of Bruno Littlemore*, premiered in Spring 2016. It's a story of evolution, biological and lingual. It's a story of love, across boundaries and species. It's a story of oppression, of inequality and colonialism. It's the story of Bruno Littlemore, an unusually intelligent chimpanzee. Presented in partnership with Working Group Theatre and New Territory Dance Company, the piece is based on the novel from recent Iowa Writers' Workshop graduate Benjamin Hale.

ARTISTS-IN-RESIDENCE 2016/2017: *Dis/Unity: A Service*

The Englert's Artist-in-Residence program hosted a group of artists for a week in Summer 2016 to workshop an in-the-making performance-based installation, *Dis/Unity: A Service*, which premiered before a live audience at the Deadwood Tavern, addressing trauma, liberation, and transcendence through sculptural installations and audience interaction. The final work premiered at the Englert in Fall 2017, and featured an ensemble of artists: Barber, Boubacar Djiga, Courtney D. Jones, Esther Baker-Tarpaga, Heidi Wiren Bartlett, Raquel Monroe, and Wendell Gray II. ■



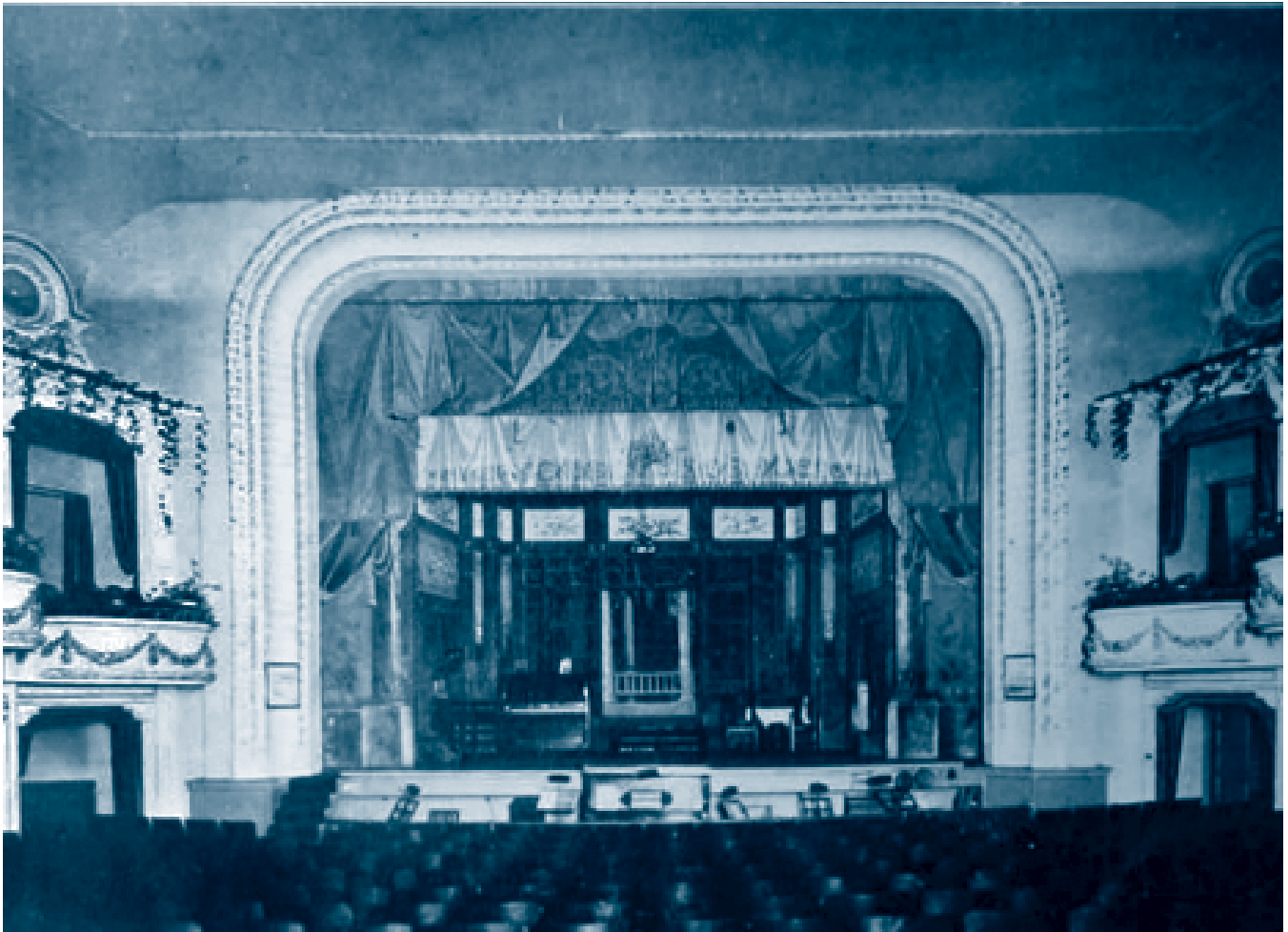


The face of the Englert circa 1912

The History of the Englert

THE ENGLERT THEATRE debuted September 26, 1912, transforming a livery stable into a space that would host touring Vaudeville acts and movies for Iowa City citizens and students. Driven by the vision of William and Etta Englert, the space initially held 1,071 seats, a candy store, and a barbershop. The second floor was also the home of the Englert family, while the third floor housed touring performers.

William Englert died in his home in 1920, at the age of 46. Etta invited A.H. Blank and Nate Chapman to oversee the theatre's operations. Chapman died five years later but his wife Dora remained active in the Englert's management (along with her brother, Al Davis, and her son Ansel). Both Dora and Etta were present on February 13, 1926 for the fire that blazed through the Englert's roof, ultimately resulting in \$125,000 worth of damage to a property that had required only \$60,000 to build 14 years before. Etta Englert — along with her new husband James Hanlon, A.H. Blank, and Dora Chapman — immediately began working to restore the building with an eye to the ornate aesthetic tendencies of the twenties.



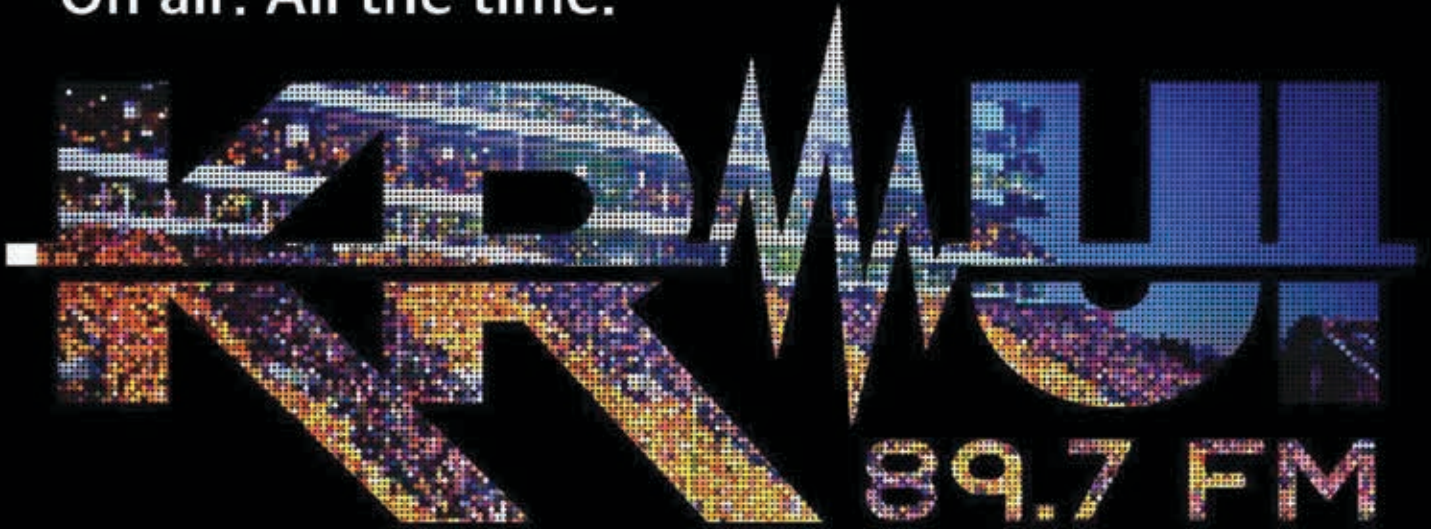
The original interior of the Englert Theatre circa 1917

In the 1980's, Blank and Central States of Des Moines (A.H. Blank's company) – in partnership with the Chapman family – decided to transform the Englert into two small-screen movie theaters. The screens operated until 1999 when the managers of the Englert family finally decided to relinquish their claim on the property. It was snapped up by a bar owner with wishes to transform it into a nightclub, but a group of concerned citizens convinced the City of Iowa City to purchase the theater and hold the property in trust until funds could be raised to purchase the space outright.

Over the next five years, this group worked diligently to rebuild the Englert as a premier arts venue and a hub in the Iowa City cultural scene. In part – under the banner of “Save the Englert” – the group diligently raised funds to restore the Englert to its 1920's glory. The names of contributors are memorialized throughout the building, including on in the Capital Campaign plaque in the Englert lobby, on plaques throughout the theatre, as well as on the backs of the seats of the theatre.

The Englert was reintroduced to the Iowa City community on December 4, 2004, when the doors were opened to its first live performance in over 40 years. Since that time, the Englert has become an increasingly prominent part of the arts scene in the Midwest, not only through its role in organizing the Mission Creek and Witching Hour festivals, but also as it commissions new artistic works (such as “The Evolution of Bruno Littlemore”) and features new work from artists-in-residence (Nat Baldwin, composer, and the Dis/Unity performance art collective) ■

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If you need assistance during the show, please go to your nearest volunteer usher. If additional assistance is needed, the usher will find the appropriate person to help you further.

Please arrive on time. We know parking downtown can be a hassle and our will-call lines can be long. Please allow extra time for travel, parking, and finding your seats. If you arrive late, we may ask you to wait until an appropriate break in the show to get you to your seats.

Do not have conversations, even whispering, during the concert or event. This will distract performers as well as fellow audience members. If your child becomes restless, frightened, or loud, please take him or her to the lobby.

Silence all cell phones, pagers, watches, and other devices. Don't text, tweet, blog, or surf the web. The glow from your device is distracting. You are here to enjoy the show, so please give the show your attention!

Keep feet, bags, and children out of the aisles. Blocking the aisles is against the fire code.

Pay attention to venue rules and posted notices. Many shows do not allow photography or recording. Flash photography is never allowed. If we ask you to stop, please do so.

Pay attention to the vibe of the show. If the crowd gets up and starts dancing, join them. Please don't try to do a one-person show for your own entertainment. We will ask you to sit down.

Respect the supporting act: You never know where they are going in the future. If you really dislike the music, take a walk or check out our current gallery exhibit on the second floor. Please be polite.

Patrons are never allowed on stage. Not before the show, during the show, or after the show.

Grounds for removal: If our staff finds you are not adhering to the above guidelines, we will give one verbal warning requesting that you change your behavior. If you continue to disregard the guidelines, we will request that you leave the premises. Being removed from more than one event will result in being banned from Englert-presented events for at least one calendar year. ■

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