

Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild

The Chippewa Valley

volunteer-driven community theatre which encourages, and promotes opportunities for community members of all ages to experience live theatre arts, whether on stage, back stage,



behind the scenes, in the audience, or in a classroom. Each year, the Theatre Guild produces Broadway musicals, award-winning plays and children's shows. In partnership with the Eau Claire Area School District, the organization offers classes and workshops for children ages 4-18, including Summer Youth Drama Camp and a Shakespeare workshop for teens – all designed to teach kids new skills, help them

develop existing talents and confidence, and give them an opportunity to shine and be respected!

Over the years, many attempts were made to form a local community theatre, and on May 19, 1981, a wonderful thing happened. Fifty people showed up at the Eau Claire Parks and Rec building, and with \$60 from passing the hat, the Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild was born.

In the beginning, rehearsals, meetings, set building, props and costume storage all happened at the old Eau Claire's Parks & Rec. building. The newly formed Theatre Guild performed its first production, Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera, *The Mikado*, in the old Central Junior High Auditorium (now, the Eau Claire Area School District office.) Beginning with the first full season in 1982, the Theatre Guild spent many years performing at North High School. As their volunteer and subscriber base expanded, the organization needed to find a new home. In 1988, office and scenic construction space was rented in the new Eau Claire Regional Arts Center and the Theatre Guild began performing on the State Theatre stage, opening with the aptly named, *Cinderella*, on April 28, 1988.



For over 30 years, the Theatre Guild has produced more than 100 wonderful Broadway musicals at The State Theatre, including *White Christmas*, *Chicago*, *The Music Man*, *Cabaret* and *Fiddler on the Roof*. Having also performed at The Masonic Temple, Westgate Sportsman Center and at UWEC's Kjer and Riverside Theatres, the Theatre Guild purchased the old Eau Claire Salvation Army building

in 2005 and converted it to a facility housing office space, box office, rehearsal space, and a performance venue. At the Grand Theatre, the Theatre Guild hosts their own season of shows, theatre arts classes, concerts, Chippewa Valley Book Festival, fundraisers, and special events. Local performance groups (including the YMCA's youth performing group Y-Rep, Downstage Left Theatre, ecWIT, Two Griffins Theatre and Speck of Dust Theatre) also perform at The Grand.



The Theatre Guild began performing Broadway musicals at the new Pablo Center at the Confluence in 2018. Beginning in the fall of 2020, the Theatre Guild will celebrate their 40th Anniversary as an organization and 15 years at The Grand Theatre!