

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2026

PROLOGUE

TRIBUTE CONCERT

Ellen and Ray van der Horst present

GET HAPPY:
ANGELA INGERSOLL
SINGS JUDY GARLAND
AN ARTISTS LOUNGE LIVE PRODUCTION

HEARTFELT COMEDY

THE TWELVE
DATES OF
CHRISTMAS

By **GINNA HOBEN**

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ABOUT PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE is the pre-show publication of Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park. It is published as a service to Playhouse season ticket holders, donors and others.

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2026-27 Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre
Season presented by



2026-27 Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre
Season presented by

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A CHRISTMAS CAROL

By **CHARLES DICKENS**

Adapted and Originally Directed by
BLAKE ROBISON

Directed by **BRIDGET LEAK**

Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre

NOV. 20 – DEC. 27, 2026



MEET YOUR NEW SCROOGE

Join us in welcoming Mark Mineart back to the *A Christmas Carol* family. Mineart is returning to the production as Ebenezer Scrooge, having played Mr. Fezziwig and the Ghost of Christmas Present in the Playhouse production from 1999-2003. He also appeared in the Playhouse productions of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1999) and *Mr. Roberts* (2004).

"While *A Christmas Carol* remains the same beloved production from year-to-year, sharp theatregoers will note that we always infuse it with something new every season," said Blake Robison, Osborn Family Producing Artistic Director, who adapted the script and directed the original production. "Every new Scrooge brings his own flair to the role. We're excited to welcome Mark back to the *Christmas Carol* family and introduce his Scrooge to our community."

Mineart has worked as an actor, director, and fight director for over 30 years. He has appeared on and off Broadway with such stars as Denzel Washington and Kelsey Grammer and worked at many of the nation's most well-respected and award-winning regional theatres. Mineart is currently an Associate Professor of Theatre Performance at Otterbein University.

In Charles Dickens' classic tale, Ebenezer Scrooge is a greedy curmudgeon who finds his heart changing when three spirits and the ghost of a long-lost friend show him the errors of his ways. Across one fateful Christmas Eve night, Scrooge recalls the warmth and generosity of past loved ones, learns the value of kindness through Tiny Tim and the Cratchit family, and glimpses a terrifying future should his heart remain the same. Featuring dazzling set, costume, and lighting designs, *A Christmas Carol* promises a magical holiday experience for your family.

Season ticket holders receive an exclusive discount on tickets to *A Christmas Carol*. Purchase early to guarantee the performances and seats you prefer.

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CONTENT ADVISORY

A Christmas Carol is suitable for all general audiences, including children ages 5 and older. Due to the full-length nature of the show, children younger than 5 cannot be admitted.

MIND READER

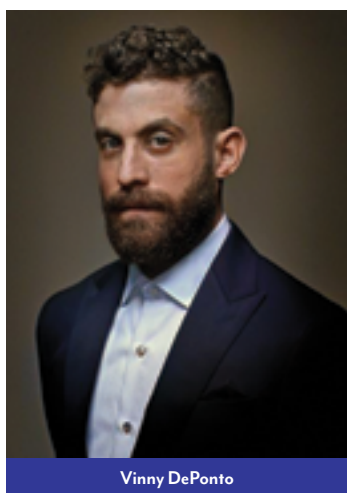
Created and performed by VINNY DEPONTO

Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre

JAN. 19 – FEB. 7, 2027

TO SEE AND BE SEEN

By Vinny DePonto



I see you.

How did you read that sentence? I'm curious. Was it in a sinister tone? As if it were a, "I'm watching you." Or did you read it as a sentence of connection? I see you. I hear you. I feel you. I'm with you.

This is the way I think about what I do. My name is Vinny DePonto and I think a lot about thinking, which I suppose makes sense considering I'm a mentalist. But this curiosity about what shape and color thoughts make, goes back long before I read my first mind. It began, I think, when I first understood that one day I would die. I was seven

and listening to the radio in the living room where they were talking about the end of the world. I thought "I have an end?" An early existential crisis at seven years old but a powerful thought that stayed with me. You see, I've struggled with anxiety most of my remembered life (not specifically from that moment by the way). But I have, for as long as I can remember, felt thoughts control me. I caved under their enormous power and because of that I seek ways to control them before they control me. And for a while that's how I lived in the world.

My last show, *Mindplay*, was about this anxiety and the power of memories and the ways that they shape you. *Mind Reader* is a little different. For me, it began as an exploration of what happens when someone sees you.

So, here's another question for you — what if someone could hear the thoughts in your head? Would you be terrified? Or relieved? Knowing you're not alone. I see you. Or... I see you.

I have spent a lot of time with a simple idea — seeing someone is a powerful thing. What do I want to do with it? I could be a master manipulator and perhaps embarrass someone on stage — make them look like a fool for falling for all the wizards' tricks. Or I can use these tricks to create a collective effervescence. A kind of magic. This is what I want to do with my work — to unite people through thought. So that when you leave the theatre you might feel in your heart that the notion that we live in our own little isolated bubbles is truly just one of the greatest tricks of the mind.

We're constantly confronted with deceptions in the world — and when paired with our own deceptions about ourselves — it can be really hard to begin to think freely and easy to fall into the same old loops that we play over and over in our heads. I want to create experiences that allow people to not only feel good about releasing their thoughts but to also be released from them.

To be a mind reader means you get to live in someone else's head for a while. To truly get to see them. And that's all we want, isn't it? To see and to be seen.



ARTIST SPONSORS **DAVID AND ELAINE BILLMIRE**

CONTENT ADVISORY

The Mind Reader is recommended for ages 13 and up.

ELLEN AND RAY VAN DER HORST present

GET HAPPY: ANGELA INGERSOLL SINGS JUDY GARLAND

AN ARTISTS LOUNGE LIVE PRODUCTION

Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre

OCT. 17 – NOV. 7, 2026

CELEBRATING AN AMERICAN ICON By Russell Florence Jr.



Judy Garland's legacy has loomed large in Angela Ingersoll's life since childhood.

"I can't remember a time without Judy Garland," said Ingersoll, whose passion for the legendary singer-actress provides the heart and soul of *Get Happy: Angela Ingersoll Sings Judy Garland*, a concert event celebrating the iconic performer. "Like many people, I met her as a young child. First, in *The Wizard of Oz*. Growing up in Indianapolis, Indiana, I was a big dreamer, and Dorothy is the quintessential dreamer. So, I identified with her early on, but it didn't stop with *Oz*. I had an uncle who collected Judy's films, television specials, and records, and that's where my real education began."

The Chicago-based actress brings her Emmy-nominated performance seen on PBS to Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park for an intimate evening of lively banter and timeless standards. Backed by a dynamite band, Ingersoll shares stories of Garland's life between such classic tunes as *The Trolley Song*, *The Man That Got Away*, *Make Someone Happy*, and *Over the Rainbow*.

"I do around 25 songs in the show, and I'm always swapping in new numbers to keep things fresh," Ingersoll said. "The marvelous composers of the Great American Songbook — like Harold Arlen, Irving Berlin, and George and Ira Gershwin — pulled our hearts in so many directions. The yearning of *The Man That Got Away* is delicious and cathartic. *Come Rain or Come Shine* has an exhilarating arrangement that really shows off my outstanding small orchestra of musicians. I dig deep for *Stormy Weather* and find tenderness in *As Long As He Needs Me*."

Critics have raved about her distinctive ability to capture Garland's captivating essence and vocal finesse. "She's got it all," noted *Times Square Chronicles*. "She has a voice as truly beautiful as Judy's, with equally big pipes. She is a great actress who is as passionate, sensitive, and heart wrenching as Judy was. If anyone was ever meant to reincarnate Judy in performance, it's undeniably her."

**"As I sing her music,
I hope her spirit
shines through."**

— Angela Ingersoll

Broadway World particularly praised her authenticity. "She's likable, charming, fiery — like Judy, she has that spark of something you just can't fake. The honesty with which Ingersoll shares her own story as it weaves with Judy's, the sincere gratitude she shows for the chance to step into her icon's shoes night after night — this is what makes *Get Happy* such a sensation in every way."

Ingersoll values Garland's authenticity as well while admiring her perseverance in the face of great adversity. "Judy was authentic and authenticity endures," she said. "Judy was the first American pop culture child star who lived and worked her whole life publicly in the spotlight. And goodness knows American entertainment is often a consumer sport. Judy survived

being chewed up and spit out over and over again. She held onto her spark, her passion, her purpose. Through the long and winding roads of our lives, we never forget her as a companion, the child Dorothy. Her anthem, *Over the Rainbow*, continually reminds us to keep reaching, keep dreaming, keep asking, through the tempest of life, 'Why, oh why, can't I?'"

Throughout her career, Garland, born Frances Ethel Gumm on June 10, 1922, experienced triumphs and pitfalls. Her accolades notably include the Academy Juvenile Award (*The Wizard of Oz*), two Academy Award nominations (*A Star Is Born*, *Judgment at Nuremberg*), and becoming the first woman to win the Grammy Award for Album of the Year (*Judy at Carnegie Hall*). In 1999, the American Film Institute ranked her the eighth-greatest female star of classic Hollywood cinema. In 1969, she died from an accidental barbiturate overdose in London at age 47.

Ingersoll hopes audiences are moved and uplifted by the sentiment and songs within this special tribute. "As I sing her music, I hope her spirit shines through. I tell stories about her and about my love of her. I mess around and act a fool, I cry and pour my heart out, all with the goal of bringing people as much genuine joy as possible."

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**THE HENDY FAMILY, IN LOVING
MEMORY OF DAVID G. HENDY**

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TO JUDY, WITH LOVE

By Russell Florence Jr.

Angela Ingersoll, an Emmy-nominated actress, singer, writer, director, and host, brings her acclaimed show, *Get Happy: Angela Ingersoll Sings Judy Garland*, to Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park with a clear intent to inspire and entertain.

In advance of her appearance, Ingersoll discussed Garland's magnetic artistry and vaudevillian instincts as well as the importance of honoring her legacy with joy.

What led to your admiration for Judy?

I learned to sing by singing along with records. I started performing onstage when I was 5 years old, thanks to my Fairy Godmother, a public school music teacher named Mrs. Holmes. From that time on, folks have likened me to Judy, saying, "How does that big voice come out of that little body?!" I do bear some physical resemblance to Ms. Garland. I've always found her range magnetic. She was at once a girl and a woman, an innocent and a sage, a chanteuse and a clown.

Were you ever hesitant to take on the idea of embodying Judy?

Sure, there were times when I thought how dare I? How dare I claim to do justice to an entertainer of such magnitude? But if something is scary it's likely worth doing.

What makes Judy the epitome of an entertainer?

As an entertainer, Judy could do it all — singing, dancing, acting, improvising, transforming. She began performing for live audiences at the age of 2, so she really was a sponge. Growing up in vaudeville, she honed her keen observation skills and quick wit as a survival mechanism. Judy believed that one could only learn to become an entertainer by getting up in front of people and doing it over and over. Get up again, fall again, and get back up again. She believed the audience was the ultimate teacher. So that need for feedback was her lifeblood. And sometimes that need made life on the stage a bit messy.

What should audiences expect at *Get Happy*? Do you bring yourself and your story to the performance?

This concert is not a play, so I'm not putting on a character. I do sometimes portray Judy in plays, and this is a bit different. I'm very much myself, and who I am as an artist is very much informed by Judy's great work. I am her artistic descendant. I suppose you could call the concert a "behind the scenes" with an actress who really crawls into Judy's psyche to bring her to life.

What are some of your favorite songs to perform in *Get Happy*?

It's always a thrill to sing *Over the Rainbow* because it's quite simply the greatest song of the 20th century. Experiencing the energy of a live audience quietly sharing all the memories in their hearts during that one song is truly spellbinding. Like Judy, I'm a sucker for old Tin Pan Alley hits like *After You've Gone*. And I relish *Just in Time* because Judy always sang it as a profoundly passionate love letter to the audience.

What are some of your favorite elements of *Get Happy* as an overall vehicle honoring Judy's legacy?

In this concert, my aim is to have fun and make sure everyone is having fun around me. Judy was a vaudevillian, you know, so I have a number of silly tricks up my sleeve. I don't want to wallow in the "poor Judy" narrative. I want to transform it. All that pain we feel, it's fuel for action. So, in these marvelous songs, I feel things very deeply with the ultimate goal of creating something playful and full of gratitude.



CONTENT ADVISORY

Get Happy is recommended for teenage and adult audiences. This celebration of Judy Garland's life and music includes some mature themes as they relate to her addiction and mental health struggles.

Photos of Angela Ingersoll.

THE TWELVE DATES OF CHRISTMAS

By GINNA HOBEN

Directed by LAURA KEPLEY

Rosenthal Shelterhouse Theatre

NOV. 7 – DEC. 27, 2026

SLEIGHING AT DATING

By Tessa D'Errico



It is a truth universally acknowledged that the dating scene is a rocky road full of awkward small talk, ghosting, and the unanswered question, “which one of us is paying for this?” Whether this brings back memories from a time you were single, or you’re swiping through Hinge profiles nightly, *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* — a heartfelt one-woman comedy about dating misadventures coming to the Rosenthal Shelterhouse stage — will bring humor and heart to your holiday season.

After seeing her fiancé kissing another woman on the televised Thanksgiving Day Parade, our newly single heroine Mary stumbles through the dating world. Her often comically absurd dating misadventures take her through a year’s worth of holidays and milestones, until the following Christmas arrives and an unexpected encounter opens her heart.

Mary’s search for love is not the first story of its kind and certainly will not be the last.

The romantic comedy genre is most often associated with film, but its roots can be traced back to Shakespeare plays like *Much Ado About Nothing* and *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. As the genre evolved, rom-coms began to reflect that era’s societal fears or audiences’ desires. In 1934, *It Happened One Night* assured audiences that money can’t buy everything and offered a dose of optimism through the story of a runaway heiress and cynical journalist. In 2020, *Palm Springs*, which features two wedding guests trapped in a time loop together, became popular with audiences watching from home who also felt trapped in a different way. Nowadays, you’re more likely to get your rom-com fix on TV with shows like *Nobody Wants This* and *Off Campus*. One thing is clear — rom-coms and love stories are a mainstay of modern storytelling.

“Finding love, especially romantic love, drives so much of our behavior,” said *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* Director Laura Kepley. “And that quest makes for great stories!”

What sets Mary’s story apart from stereotypical holiday love stories is playwright Ginna Hoben’s frank and punchy script, based on a series of semi-autobiographical events. In some ways, *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* almost has all the makings of a rom-com with holiday flair like *Bridget Jones’ Diary* or *You’ve Got Mail* — a relatable but hilarious heroine, meddling family

members, etc. But this play is decidedly not a rom-com. Instead, it trades the genre’s tropes of meet-cutes and serendipitous reunions for a self-aware and authentic exploration of the dating world.

Typically, rom-coms focus on the journey of a couple falling in love, but the one-woman format of this show keeps the spotlight on Mary’s journey — not just through the dating world but also through her career in a sort of late-coming-of-age. As a character, Mary is delightfully well-rounded, which makes her the perfect narrator to give depth to this flirty holiday romp. She’s easy to root for, so the play is enjoyable whether you can commiserate with her and her dating horror stories or haven’t been in the dating scene recently.

As a one-woman play, the script requires the actress playing Mary to also play all of Mary’s quirky family members, her ex, all her dates, and more — a challenging but rewarding feat unique to one-person plays. In this instance, the reward is the connection it creates between Mary and the audience. From the first moments of the show, it feels less like a performance and more like hearing a story from a close friend.

“A one-person play is storytelling at its most elemental and intimate,” Kepley said. “In a solo play there is a special electricity between the actor and the audience that is palpable and unlike any other experience in the theatre.”

If you’re sick of your good-intentioned family members sending you information on local matchmakers, seeing *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* at the Playhouse won’t help you find someone to bring home for the holidays, but it can give you a healthy dose of optimism. The show’s sometimes-cynical look on love may not offer audiences a perfect Hollywood happy ending, but it still provides a sense of hope and good times ahead, like all heartfelt holiday stories should. For the audience, this hope may seem more earned because of Mary’s likeability, the script’s honesty, and the intimacy of a one-woman show.

As seen through Mary’s journey, dating often seems like a hopeless cause, good for nothing but a funny story to tell. But the fact that we keep looking for love, and keep telling stories about finding love, is proof that we believe in love. And isn’t love what the holiday season is all about?

PRODUCTION SPONSOR **RON MATSON AND DANIEL YOUNG**

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ARTIST SPONSOR **IN MEMORY OF DR. BOB AND SUZANNE HASL**

JOLLY HOLIDAY: CRAFTING CHRISTMAS COMEDY WITH DIRECTOR LAURA KEPLEY

By Tessa D'Errico

Ginna Hoben's one-woman comedy *The Twelve Dates of Christmas* offers a heartfelt and relatable alternative to traditional holiday rom-coms. Director Laura Kepley reflects on the themes of the show and the endurance of love stories in all forms.

As a director, what makes you say yes to a “first date” with a script?

The five things that make me fall in love with a script are: a captivating story, characters who I care about, a big idea that makes me see the world and the human experience in a new way, an artistic challenge that fires up my creativity, and a sense of uplift at the end that makes me feel more connected and alive.

Who should go on a "date" with this show by coming to see it, and what should they expect from it?

This play is for romantics. For anyone who has loved and lost and had the courage to go out there and try again. For anyone who is currently dating. And anyone who has dated and is hopeful they never have to date again! They can expect laughs, surprises, and a fun night out.

From *Much Ado About Nothing*, to *The Philadelphia Story* to *Sex in the City*, why do you think we keep coming back to stories about relationships and dating?

Love is a basic human need. It's uplifting and inspiring when love is found, and in the case of this play, very funny when it is not.

We know this show is about dating. What else is it about?

Resilience, courage, family, connection, and discovering what truly makes you happy.

This show premiered in 2010 and is still being performed at theatres across the country. What do you think resonates with multiple generations of theatregoers and date-goers?

It acknowledges how difficult the holidays can be, especially when you are single. We get to hang out with Mary as she navigates the ups and downs of the season. We become her friend and confidante as she shares her hopes, dreams, and discoveries. We laugh with her and cheer her on.

What experiences or feelings do you hope audiences leave the theatre with?

I hope the audience leaves feeling warm and fuzzy, like a good Christmas sweater. I hope they are encouraged to tell someone their funny dating stories. If they are single and feeling lonely, I hope they leave inspired to take a chance on a new connection.



Laura Kepley

FIRST DATE... KINDA NERVOUS

Get to know Laura with these “first date” questions:

What's the last book you read?

The God of the Woods by Liz Moore

How would you describe your perfect day?

Sleeping in, going to the beach, dinner with friends

Are you an introvert or an extrovert?

Extrovert who once a week really enjoys being alone

What topic could you talk about forever?

Theatre and my dog, Chester

Best spot for a first date in Cincinnati?

Eden Park

Where are you most likely to be at a party?

In the kitchen (talking not cooking!)

What's your go-to french fry dip?

Ketchup and aioli

Can anyone really be friends with their ex?

Maybe????

CONTENT ADVISORY

The Twelve Dates of Christmas is recommended for older teenage and adult audiences. As a newly single woman navigates her life post breakup, she journeys into the dating world and describes her mishaps with adult relationships using strong language and providing strong laughs.



STEPPING THROUGH THE STAGE DOOR: A SUSTAINABLE WAY TO SUPPORT THE PLAYHOUSE

By Josh Senger



A peek behind the Moe and Jack's Place — The Rouse Theatre Sound Booth with Audio Engineer Adam Jacob.

How many hours does it take to bring a production to life in the Rosenthal Shelterhouse? How many artists, craftspeople, and technicians does it take to fill Moe and Jack's Place – The Rouse Theatre with light, sound, scenery, and story?

The answer is: a lot.

Long before the curtain rises, an extraordinary amount of work is happening behind the scenes. Playwrights develop new work. Sets are built. Costumes are fitted. Actors rehearse. And the next production is already taking shape while audiences are enjoying the one on stage.

Stage Door, the Playhouse's new monthly giving program, is an invitation to be part of that work year-round.

Monthly giving is simple: choose an amount that is meaningful to you, and your gift is made automatically each month. For the Playhouse, that consistency provides something incredibly valuable: the ability to plan with confidence.

Knowing that support will be there next month — and the month after that — allows us to invest in artists, bring education programs to more students, develop new plays, and respond when an unexpected artistic opportunity comes our way.

And small monthly gifts add up. Just \$10 a month becomes \$120 a year; \$25 becomes \$300. If you already support the Playhouse annually, Stage Door also offers an easy way to increase your impact by spreading your gift throughout the year. When hundreds of patrons make that commitment together, it becomes a powerful and sustainable source of support.

Stage Door is also about bringing you closer to the theatre you make possible. Throughout the year, we'll create opportunities for Stage Door supporters to go behind the curtain and learn more about the artists, craftspeople, and creative process that transform an empty stage into the worlds you experience from your seat.

Your ticket gets you into the theatre. Stage Door takes you behind the scenes.

Joining is easy. Visit the "Give a Gift" page at cincyplay.com and select monthly giving or call us and we'll be happy to set it up for you. Gifts can begin at just \$10 a month.

We hope you'll step through the Stage Door and become part of what happens next.

For questions about Stage Door or monthly giving, please contact Individual Giving Manager Josh Senger at **513-977-2067** or josh.senger@cincyplay.com.