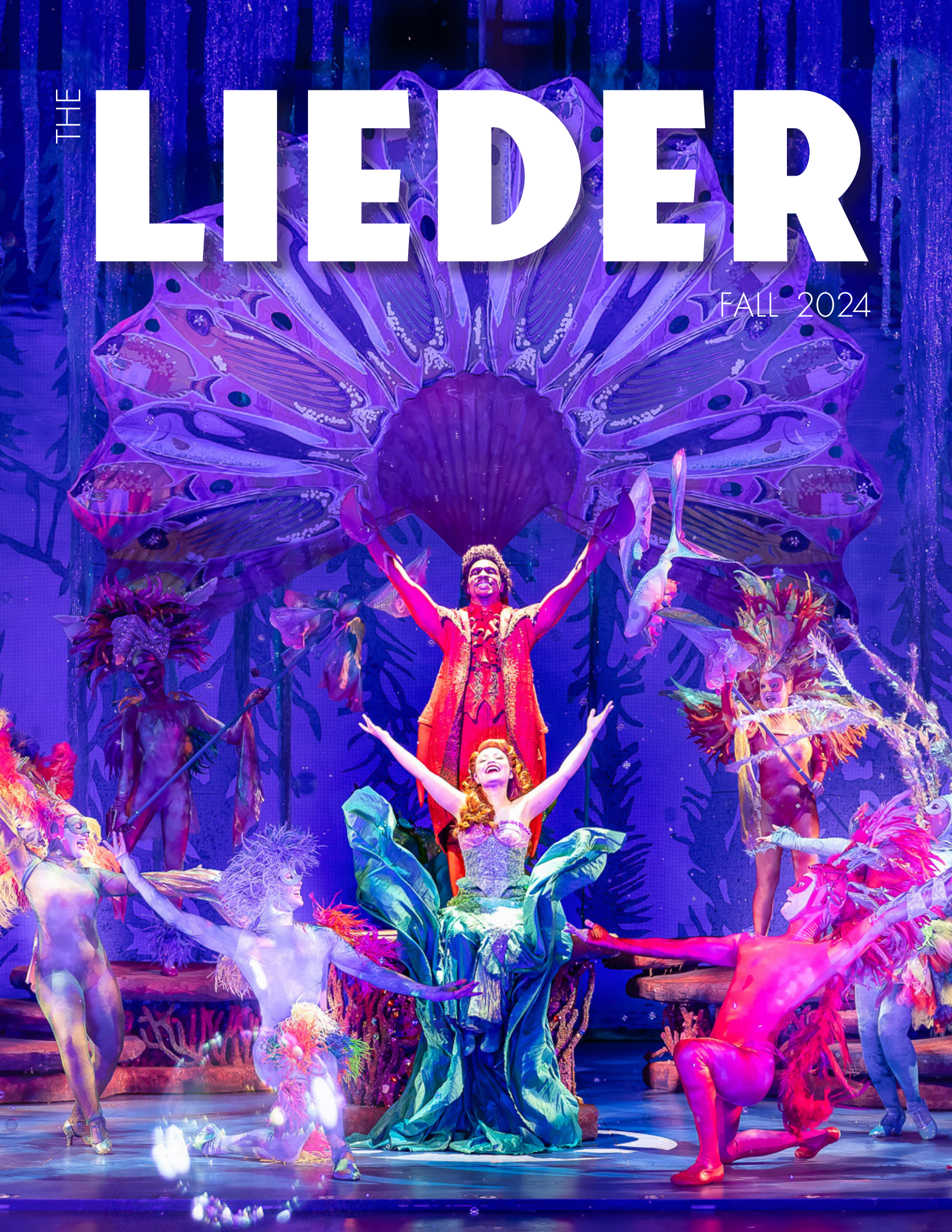


THE  
**LIEDER**

FALL 2024



# WELCOME

to the groundbreaking 2024-2025 Lied Center season!



Bill Stephan, CVE  
Executive Director &  
Chief Artistic Officer



We're already off to a thrilling start, having experienced the sold out run of the world premiere play *A House Divided*, the moving and unforgettable *Dear Evan Hansen*, the electrifying return of *Step Afrika!*, and of course the Nebraska premiere of the smash hit *Back to the Future*. And we're just getting started!

I hope you'll join us many more times this fall at the Lied. We could all use more laughter in our lives, and I personally can't wait for both *Carson Tonight* and *Capitol Fools!* *Carson Tonight* is a chance to relive all the magic of *The Tonight Show* on Johnny Carson's 99th birthday, and then the hilarious *Capitol Fools* (the next generation of *The Capitol Steps*) return just in time for the Presidential Election. It seems to me that there's never been a better time for some bipartisan spoofery!

We also get to experience the long-awaited performance of Yunchan Lim in November. This thrilling young artist has taken the classical music world by storm, and he's now one of the most sought-after pianists on the planet. He's playing a solo concert at Carnegie Hall in the spring, and it's already nearly sold out! You don't need to travel to New York to see this superstar, however, because he'll be right here at the Lied.

As always, I want to thank each and every one of you for your continued support of the Lied Center and the arts in Nebraska. It's because of you that the Lied Center is able to present the top artists in the world, provide life-changing arts education experiences, nurture new work, and inspire the people of Nebraska through the performing arts each and every day. In times of division, the arts are a unifying force that provide beauty, joy, and inspiration when we need it most. Thank you for being part of making the world a better place!



Dee Cummins  
President | Friends of Lied  
Board of Directors

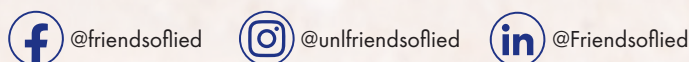
It's time for another exciting season of performances and educational events for the Lied Center for Performing Arts.

We couldn't do it without you. As a member of the Friends of Lied your support plays a major role in making each season happen. Your membership provides you with special benefits such as the inside scoop on what's happening via *The Lieder*, advance access to season ticket subscriptions, and many more benefits depending on your level of support. Best of all, you have the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of amazing performances.

The Friends of Lied Board of Directors is already hard at work planning special events to compliment the season's performances. We are anxious to have you join us at both the Lied Center in Lincoln for special events and performances and at the Arts Across Nebraska events all across Nebraska.

Mark your calendars for February 1, 2025 for our annual gala. Join us in experiencing "Paris Lights" on the main stage at the Lied. Come with us to the exciting City of Lights - enjoy the thrill of the music and bright lights of the Moulin Rouge and Paris. It promises to be an amazing experience.

**See you at the Lied in 2024-2025. Let the season begin!**



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ON THE COVER:

Disney's *The Little Mermaid* will be at the Lied Center, November 12-17, 2024. Order tickets online at <https://tickets.liedcenter.org/3153>

## DISTINGUISHED ARTIST EVENT

Friends of Lied members at the Distinguished and Patron Friend levels and Circles of Giving members were treated to a Distinguished Artist Event on September 8. Guests enjoyed a piano performance by Jason Michael Webb, the award-winning director, composer, lyricist, musical director, producer and arranger whose credits include Broadway hits such as *MJ The Musical* and films such as *The Greatest Showman* and *Respect*. This special thank you event held in the Lied Center Commons included a cocktail hour featuring hors d'oeuvres and desserts from Yes Chef Catering and a hosted bar.



## FALL RETREAT

In September, the Friends of Lied Board of Directors held its annual Fall Retreat in the Lied Center Commons. With fall mums decorating the tables, existing board members welcomed 17 new members for the first full board meeting of the 2024-2025 season. Members enjoyed tasty scones from Slow Your Dough and lunch options from the Talon Room followed by macarons from Butterfly Bakery. Then Dee Cummins called to order her first Board meeting as Friends of Lied president. Board members worked on goal setting and brainstorming fresh ideas for the coming year, and were able to round out the day meeting in committees for the Paris Lights gala fundraiser coming in February.



## MEMBER FEATURE

As they began to build their lives together, one of Deb and John Nelson's great joys was discovering a shared love of the performing arts, especially musical theater. From a spontaneous decision to see *The Producers* in the West End on their honeymoon to seeing six Broadway shows in four days, the theater has been a constant call.

"For more than 15 years, the Lied Center for Performing Arts has been the heart and home that we return to. It has been a constant source of inspiration, and exposed us to artists we know and love, as well as new acts and artists. In short, the Lied has 'educated, inspired, and entertained us.'"

Favorite shows have included *A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder*, multiple Alvin Ailey Dance Theater shows, two visits by Danny Elfman, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Once*, *Come from Away*, Yo Yo Ma, and of course, The Ukelele Orchestra of Great Britain.

Deb currently serves on the Friends of Lied Board of Directors and is a co-chair for the Paris Lights gala fundraiser coming in February.



## STAFF FEATURE

Mark Moore is Associate Director of Events and Facilities Services. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Performing Arts from the University of Nebraska. Mark worked at the Lied Center for its first eleven years, where he served as Production Stage Manager and then the Senior Events Coordinator. He then was lured away from the Lied for the private sector in operations and distribution. He was rehired to the Lied Center two days before *Phantom of the Opera* and has been in the Front of House ever since.

The Facilities Team and Mark are very proud to make the Lied a clean and safe environment, especially when the Lied was the first theater in the country to re-open after COVID.

Speaking of safety, Mark is a graduate of a two-year program for AVSS, the Academy for Venus Safety and Security. With that, Mark is the contact with UNLPD, Homeland and the FBI. Besides other projects, he is the "keeper" of the Lied's crazy calendar. Mark and his wife, Ann, have two daughters, two sons-in-law, and their first granddaughter, all of whom enjoy music, theater, and the mountains of Colorado.



# Disney's *The Little Mermaid* Comes to Life at the Lied Center

November 12-17, 2024

*"A wonderful, dazzling production!"*  
-BroadwayWorld

You're invited on an adventure Under the Sea! BroadwayWorld describes the new production of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* that's coming to the Lied Center as "gorgeously-mesmerizing, visually-stunning... filled with colorful costumes, vibrant sets, and the awe-inspiring sight of actual gravity-defying 'swimming' mermaids that soar above the stage."

In a magical kingdom beneath the sea, the beautiful young mermaid Ariel longs to leave her ocean home to live in the world above. Based on one of Hans Christian Andersen's most beloved stories and the classic animated film, Disney's *The Little Mermaid* is a hauntingly beautiful love story for the ages.

With music by eight-time Academy® Award winner Alan Menken, this fishy fable will capture your heart with its irresistible songs including "Under the Sea," "Kiss the Girl," and "Part of Your World." This spectacular new production will enchant the whole family!

This thrilling production also marks the start of a new partnership between the Lied Center and McCoy Rigby Entertainment in Southern California, bringing new productions to Lincoln. The Lied Center will be one of only a few venues in the nation where audiences can experience this lavish show!



# You're invited to celebrate Johnny Carson's 99th Birthday at the Lied Center!

October 23, 2024 would have been the 99th birthday of Nebraska native, UNL alum, and Lied Center founding supporter Johnny Carson. So we decided to celebrate in a big way!

For one evening only, you have the opportunity to relive the magic and laughter of Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* on the anniversary of Johnny's 99th Birthday with the talented variety of artists and personalities who were frequently featured as in-studio guests during his extraordinary 30-year late-night run. Woven through the evening will be original clips of Johnny himself.



Carson Entertainment Group and the Lied Center present this one-time special event, hosted by comedian Pat Hazell, plus stage performances by master magician Lance Burton, comedian Cathy Ladman, ventriloquist Jay Johnson, America's Got Talent Veterans - The Passing Zone jugglers Jon Wee & Owen Morse, and jazz singer Nicole Henry accompanied live by the UNL Jazz Orchestra conducted by Gregory Simon playing from the original music charts of The Tonight Show Orchestra.

**CARSON TONIGHT: JOHNNY'S 99TH BIRTHDAY** will be on Wednesday, October 23 at 7:30pm. Tickets are available at [liedcenter.org/carson-tonight](https://liedcenter.org/carson-tonight). Come celebrate Johnny!

## The Grow a Show Program Brings *A House Divided* to the Carson Theater

On September 17-22, more than 1,300 people experienced the world premiere play *A House Divided* in the Carson Theater. Produced as part of the Lied Center's Grow a Show program, this new work by Christina Kirk examined the bitter political and personal divisions in the Lincoln White House when Mary Todd Lincoln's Confederate half sister came to visit during the height of the Civil War.

The Lied Center has a long history of supporting and creating new work as part of the Grow A Show Program, and over the years the Lied has commissioned, created, and partnered on dozens of theatrical, dance, and musical compositions.

Executive Director Bill Stephan, who chose to produce the play after attending a first reading in November of 2023, said, "Abraham Lincoln used the phrase 'a house divided' in his famous speech known as the 'House Divided Speech,' delivered on June 16, 1858. The phrase is a reference from the Bible, Matthew 12:25 in which Jesus says, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.' I hope this play may help bring our community and potentially our nation together in that spirit of unity Abraham Lincoln so believed in. Keep an eye on this new work, as you may see it on stages in New York, Chicago, or Los Angeles in the future."



In addition to the show, the Lied Center also presented a panel discussion and lecture featuring celebrated author and Civil War expert Dr. Jeremi Suri called *A House Divided: Politics Today and American History*, diving deeper into the topics presented in the play.

The Lied Center is proud to support new works that enrich our community, encourage thoughtful discussion, and inspire positive change!

# Lied Summer Camps Transform Lives



## Lied Center Triple Threat Broadway Intensive

The 2024 Lied Center Triple Threat Broadway Intensive program was a transformative experience for its 50 participants, who ranged from high school freshmen to college freshmen. Our esteemed featured teaching artist, Ryan Scott Oliver, as well as Sam Hartley and Reynel Reynaldo, led students from Nebraska and surrounding states in a top-tiered training experience in musical theatre. Feedback from the intensive was overwhelmingly positive, with participants highlighting the value of honest feedback, personal growth, and new skills gained. Notably, 100% of eligible participants expressed intentions to return next summer, reflecting the program's profound impact. Scholarships also played a key role, offering full tuition and housing support to select students.



## Lied Center Piano Academy

The 2024 Lied Center Piano Academy hosted 17 participants, ranging from high school freshmen to college freshmen. Under the guidance of our featured teaching artist, Eldred Marshall, as well as distinguished teaching artists like Paul Barnes and Mark Clinton from UNL, students gained valuable insights into piano technique, collaborative playing, and new repertoire. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, with many noting the unique opportunity to connect with fellow pianists and improve their skills. Additionally, scholarships provided full tuition and housing for select students, and 100% of eligible participants plan to return next year.



## Grow a Show Musical Theatre Workshop Returns for 2024

The Lied Center's Grow a Show Musical Theatre Workshop returned for 2024, hosting staged readings of two original musicals with potential for Broadway success. These workshops have been held in previous years (2013, 2015, 2017, and 2019). A panel of award-winning experts, including writer Robert L. Freedman, music director/producer Jason Michael Webb, and producer Kevin Bannerman, provided feedback to the creators of the selected musicals.

The Lincoln community was invited to attend these free performances on September 9 and 10 at 7:30 PM. Each evening featured a first act reading, followed by expert feedback. Performances were held at the Lied Center Mainstage.

Monday, September 9 featured the musical *Tales From The Comic Book Crackdown* written by Benjamin Dickow and Ray Hedgpeth. The musical centers on the 1954 Senate hearings aimed at dismantling the comic book industry, focusing on Bill Gaines, publisher of *Tales from the Crypt* and *The Vault of Horror*, and his defense of comic books. This musical featured a mixture of cast of UNL students as well as local community performers and was directed by UNL Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film chair Hank Stratton, with Kaleb Wilkening providing music direction, and Brad Buffum as stage manager. 408 people attended the Monday performance.

Tuesday, September 10 featured the musical *The God Machine* written by Matthew McCollum. This musical tells the story of John Murray Spear, an abolitionist preacher who left his church for Spiritualism, culminating in his creation of a "mechanical messiah" that ultimately failed. The story is seen through the eyes of a mysterious follower named Mother Mary. This musical featured a mixture of cast of UNL students as well as local community performers and was directed by UNL Johnny Carson School of Theatre and Film faculty member Ann Marie Pollard, with music direction by Mollie Manner, and stage management by Emma Jorgenson. 179 people attended the performance.

**In total, 587 audience members attended Grow a Show, a workshop record!**

## Student matinees offer arts opportunities for all ages

Registration is now open for our 2024-2025 student matinee series! School day performances of world-class artists bring young people and educators (Pre-K-12th grades) together from across Nebraska to share unforgettable experiences. Presenting music, theatre, and dance, the Lied's student matinee performances enhance classroom learning, expand cultural awareness, and inspire creativity in all. For more information on the program to share with educators or homeschool groups, please scan the QR code.



**Mermaid Theatre  
of Nova Scotia's  
Goodnight Moon &  
The Runaway Bunny**

**Grades pre-K to 2**

**Tues., Jan. 14, 2025  
10:30 a.m.**

**Mainstage Theater**

***Syncopated Ladies!***

**Grades 6–12**

**Wed., Jan. 22, 2025  
10:30 a.m.**

**Mainstage Theater**

***Around the Americas  
with 123 Andrés!***

**Grades K to 6**

**Mon., Feb. 24, 2025  
10:30 a.m.**

**Mainstage Theater**

***Kerfuffle's The Conductors***

**Grades Pre-K & ages 2-6**

**Thurs., Feb. 27, 2025  
10:30 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.**

**Fri., Feb. 28, 2025  
10:30 a.m.**

**Johnny Carson Theater**



Friends  
of



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Friends of Lied Presents

PARIS

LIGHTS

FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Join us for a spectacular evening at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. This Moulin Rouge-themed evening will include cocktails, live and silent auction, a gourmet dinner on stage, and live entertainment. It's all for a good cause, so dig out your sparkling diamonds and dust off your dancing shoes. It is sure to be exciting and leave you wanting more, more, more!

Sponsorship opportunities are now available. Contact Amy Ossian at [aossian2@unl.edu](mailto:aossian2@unl.edu) for information.

Friends of Lied members receive early access to purchase tickets starting November 6. Visit [www.liedcenter.org/gala](http://www.liedcenter.org/gala).

**We hope to see you there!**