

THE

LIEDER

FALL 2025



CARSON TONIGHT

JOHNNY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY
WITH & LIVE COMEDY, MAGIC
MUSIC PERFORMANCES

Welcome

to the thrilling 25-26
Lied Center season!



Bill Stephan, CVE
Executive Director &
Chief Artistic Officer



We got off to an early and spectacular start this year, kicking off the season with 13 performances of Disney's *Frozen* in August. This was a historic show for several reasons, including being the Lied's first outing as co-producer of a mainstage show of these epic proportions. It also boasts the 4th highest attendance of any show in Lied history (following *Hamilton*, *The Phantom of the Opera*, and *Moulin Rouge*), and certainly the show with the largest number of children having their first Lied Center (and often, first live performing arts!) experience. What a thrill it was to see the Lied Center packed with families making forever memories and all the little princesses and princes absolutely mesmerized by the magic of live performance!

Now we look forward to a fall full of unique and exciting events, including our signature celebration of Johnny Carson's 100th birthday on Oct. 23. We're celebrating Nebraska's favorite son (and Lied Center founder!) with a once-in-a-lifetime evening, and you don't want to miss it. Read more on page 4 of this newsletter!

We're also looking forward to the return of many of our favorite musical masters over the next few months, including the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis, Soweto Gospel Choir, Yo-Yo Ma, and Canadian Brass.

The Lied Center founders dreamed of bringing the world's top artists to the people of Lincoln and Nebraska, and because of your support we're realizing that dream every day! Thank you for all you do to support the life-changing power of the arts to bring people together, lift people up, and remind us of the good things we all share.

I look forward to seeing you soon at the Lied!



Deb Nelson
President | Friends of Lied
Board of Directors



The Lied Center for Performing Arts has already had its first show of the season with Disney's *Frozen*. What an absolute treat during the scorchingly hot days in August!

Friends of Lied members throughout the state are vital to sustaining a vibrant performing arts center in Nebraska. Now, more than ever, we need your help in supporting the Lied Center, as funding for the arts has taken a hit. As ticket sales cover less than half of the cost of putting on a show, fundraising is so important in assuring the Lied can bring in the best artists in the world. Friends of Lied currently has 1,035 members. We have a goal to increase to 1,300 members by Dec. 31. Please help us by spreading the word about why you love the Lied Center, inviting others to shows they will enjoy, or even better, gifting them their own Friends of Lied membership, so they may enjoy all the benefits.

Arts Across Nebraska will kick off early this year with performances of Omaha Street Percussion. You can attend performances in Alliance on Sept. 22, Scottsbluff on Sept. 23, and McCook on Sept. 24. Please encourage friends and family in these communities to attend the shows. Educational outreach throughout the state is an important mission of the Lied Center and is funded in part by your Friends of Lied membership.

The annual FOL gala will be Jan. 31, 2026. Mark your calendars and don't delay in getting your tickets when they go on sale. Last year we sold out in eight days, and we don't want you to miss the event of the season. We also encourage you to follow Friends of Lied on social media. We will be posting more content this year on what the FOL board does behind the scenes.

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the Lied!

FALL RETREAT

In September, the Friends of Lied Board of Directors held its annual Fall Retreat in the Lied Center Commons. With centerpieces of gourds and pumpkins providing fall color, attendees heard details on the Lied Center's upcoming season from Executive Director Bill Stephan and an overview on educational programming from Educational Outreach Manager Sasha Dobson. Existing board members welcomed 12 new members for the first full board meeting of the 2025-2026 season, where everyone brainstormed fresh ideas for the year ahead. The day wrapped up with committee work on the Lied Royale gala fundraiser coming Jan. 31.



GIVE TO LINCOLN DAY

A big thank you to everyone who donated to Friends of Lied through Give to Lincoln Day in May! We received 203 donations and raised a total of \$105,276.75 including matching funds. This is a new record for the Friends of Lied! We were #18 on the leaderboard out of 502 participating nonprofits.



STAFF FEATURE

Michelle Zinke has been the Administrative Coordinator for the Lied Center since Jan. 2025. She has 30 years of experience in the nonprofit sector in a variety of roles, including grants, procurement, training and events, service coordination, community outreach, and more. She also has been an active member of the Lincoln performing arts community since 2000 as a stage manager and other behind-the-scenes positions. Michelle has a Master of Arts degree in Leadership and an undergraduate degree in Anthropology and Spanish. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for Voices of Hope and is active with several other community organizations including Fresh Start Home and Little Free Pantries. Michelle is a recipient of the Artscene Backstage Award (Mayor's Arts Award) and the Bud Cuca Servant Leader of the Year Award (Leadership Lincoln).



Michelle Zinke

WELCOME NEW FRIENDS OF LIED MEMBERS!

Amanda Andersen

Bonnie Arrasmith

Dolores Arten

Kate Aufdenkamp

Marie Barrett

Allison Bauer

Janet Behrends

Patricia Bennett

Dagnija Bite

Leslie Bonelli

Traci Bruckner

Cary & Ginger Colton

Kurt Clyne

Nancy Coniglio

William Dewey

Scott & Kate Engel

Ann Z. Eroshevich

Chuck Fuhrer

Elizabeth Goehring

Darrin & Diana Good

Larry E. Graham

Martin Hall

Linda & Richard Harr

Chris & Nancy Henry

Charley & Debbie Hill

Ken Hopkins

Robert J. Huff

Tony & Jennifer Jessup

David Jones

Shelley Kahrs

Amy Killeen

Christine K. Kunz

Sheila Lueders

Elizabeth & Herman Lui

Michaela Mallery

Lois Mayo

Lynne McNally

Peggy Newquist

Mark & Debra Nicholson

Patrick & Lacey O'Hare

Christy Phelps

Cynthia Pierce

Janet K. Poley

Paul E. Read

Marjorie Ross

Debby Sampson

JoAnn & David Schoengold

Sue Schulz

Elizabeth Scott

Joe Selig

Coleen Shepler

Peter Smith & Annette

Thompson

Frank & Paula Swinnea

Beverly J. Thomsen

In Memory of Eric D. Brandt

Thomas Trumble

Jan & Mike Tuckerman

Cindy Waltke

Tyler & Jenna Waters

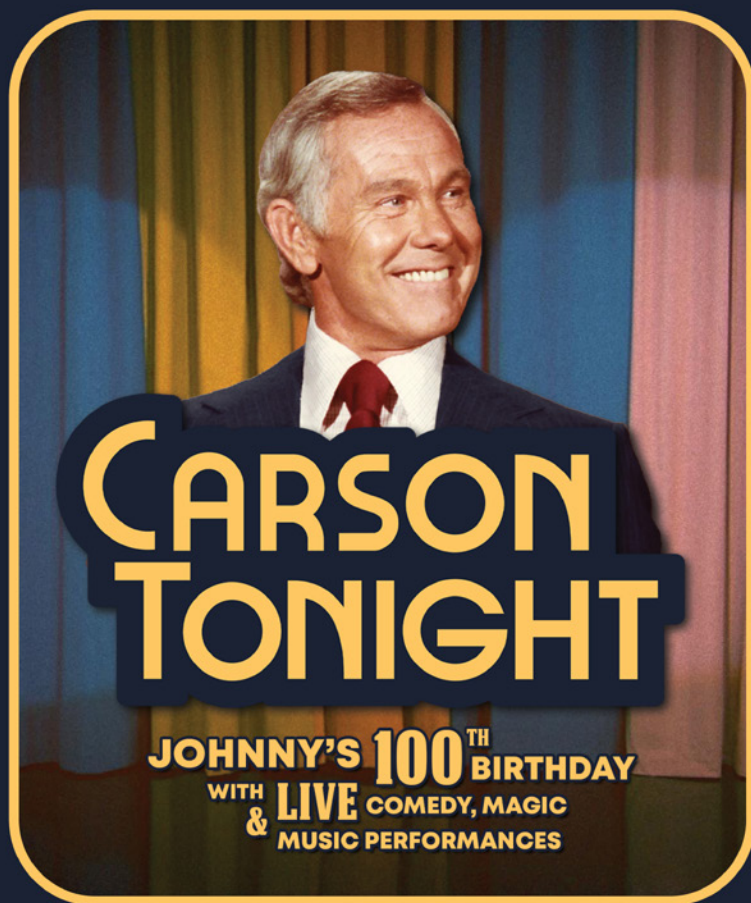
David & Mikaela White

Margee Bartle & Terry

Wittler

Julia Zornes

These new members joined between May 1 and Sept. 7, 2025



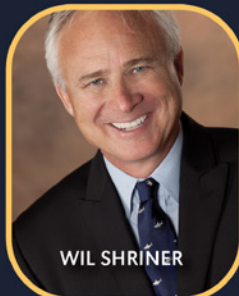
MARILYN MAYE



UNL JAZZ ORCHESTRA



LANCE BURTON



WIL SHRINER



MIKE CAVENY



CAROL LEIFER



PAT HAZELL



TINA LENERT



PERSONAL MANAGEMENT
VAL IRVING ASSOCIATES
436 MADISON AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

MARILYN MAYE

RELUCENT XXX MANAGEMENT
WILLIAM MORRIS AGENCY INC.
1000 NEW YORK AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

Experience an Intimate Evening with Manhattan's Queen of Cabaret

The legendary Marilyn Maye holds the record for the most guest appearances by a singer on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, with 76 show-stopping features that led Johnny to dub her the "Super Singer." The night before she's part of the *Carson 100* celebration, she'll perform her signature solo cabaret in the Lied's Carson Theater.

A timeless icon who has been entertaining audiences for more than eight decades, Manhattan's Queen of Cabaret is thrilled to be part of celebrating Johnny Carson's 100th birthday. Maye is a consummate entertainer who breathes new life into classics, carrying the torch from her peers who originated tunes of the Great American Songbook. Expect to hear entertaining stories of her time on *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*!

The Houston Chronicle termed her "A National Treasure," and the Smithsonian Institution chose her recording of "Too Late Now" for its Best Compositions of the 20th Century permanent collection, alongside artists including Billie Holiday, Frank Sinatra, and Judy Garland. Maye regularly performs for capacity crowds at NYC's 54 Below, and made her Carnegie Hall solo concert debut in 2023. Don't miss her performance in the Carson Theater on Oct. 22!

Tickets for both events are available now at liedcenter.org

Heeeeeeere's Johnny!

Celebrating Johnny Carson's 100th Birthday

You're invited to Johnny Carson's 100th birthday party! On Oct. 23, the Lied Center will celebrate the life and legacy of native Nebraskan, UNL alum, Lied Center founder, and iconic late-night host Johnny Carson.

Carson 100 will bring back the magic and laughter of Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* with the talented artists who were featured guests during Johnny's extraordinary 30-year late-night run. This special one-time event is hosted by *Seinfeld* writer Pat Hazell with live performances by master magician Lance Burton, comedians Wil Shriner and Carol Leifer, singer Marilyn Maye, variety acts Mike Caveney & Tina Lenert, and the full UNL Jazz Orchestra under the direction of Greg Simon, plus amazing highlights of Johnny's most memorable moments and characters. Come join us in celebrating Nebraska's favorite son on his centennial birthday!

This once-in-a-lifetime event is produced in partnership with Carson Entertainment Group.

Big Red Lied Experience Welcomes Students, Community Back to Campus

The Arts for All program kicked off the season on Aug. 29 by hosting the annual Big Red Lied Experience, an event packed with activities, food trucks, and community, topped off with a concert. This year's headliner was mxmtoon, a singer-songwriter known for her intimate, ukulele-driven indie pop music that dives into themes of self-discovery, identity, and the ups and downs of coming-of-age with honesty and vulnerability. The show opened with Emmy Jo, an indie pop artist based in New York City and a University of Nebraska-Lincoln alumna and former Lied Center intern.

The event started early with carnival games, inflatables, a photo booth, and food trucks, provided by UPC Nebraska. There was also an arts club fair sponsored by the Lied Center Student Council featuring 13 different student organizations, including Lazzi Improv, UNL Theatrix, and many more. Students could check off activities on a bingo card for a chance to win a Lied Center Broadway package, making the experience even more interactive. Over 800 people attended the concert, creating an exciting and lively atmosphere.

Events like these are so important at the start of the school year because they give students a chance to connect with the arts and each other. Arts for All gives students free or reduced price access to performances that might otherwise be out of reach, helping them make the most of their college experience while building a sense of community on campus.





2025-2026 Student Matinee Offerings at the Lied Feature Literary Hits

Every year, hundreds of students from Lincoln and far beyond experience student matinees at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. These special performances during the school day are fun and meaningful experiences for students of all ages, often providing a first glimpse into the world of the performing arts and powerful connections to classroom learning. This year's offerings are unique productions based on bestselling books by Dav Pilkey, Mo Willems, and Mari Sandoz.

Best of all? These shows are available for **only \$5 per student!** For every 10 students, we'll also provide two complimentary adult tickets.

Check out this year's offerings, then share with the teachers, parents, and students in your life so they can plan their trip to the Lied!

Our first matinee of the season is *Dog Man: The Musical* on Nov. 10 at 10:30 AM. Based on the worldwide bestselling hit series by Dav Pilkey, *Dog Man: The Musical* is a hilarious and heartwarming production following the chronicles of Dog Man, who with the head of a dog and the body of a policeman, loves to fight crime and chew on the furniture. But while trying his best to be a good boy, can he catch Petey, the world's most evil cat, who has cloned himself to exact revenge on the doggy do-gooder? Find out in this epic musical adventure featuring the hilarity and heart of beloved characters from Dav Pilkey, the creator of Captain Underpants and Cat Kid Comic Club.

Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical! is our second matinee of the year on Feb. 19, 2026 at 10:30 AM. With a script written by Mo Willems, the creator of the #1 New York Times best-selling "Pigeon" picture books, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* is even more fun than staying up late and having a hot dog party! Featuring an innovative mix of songs and feathers, *Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus! The Musical!* is sure to get everyone's wings flapping.

Lastly, we are presenting a Lied Center commissioned work, Animal Engine Theatre Company's *Capital City* on Apr. 10, 2026. Money. Corruption. Murder. Welcome to Capital City. In this searing original play inspired by Nebraska author Mari Sandoz' infamous novel *Capital City*, the Great Depression has split the people of a fictional Midwestern city in two: the rich and the poor. What lengths will the have-nots go to in order to gain back their land, homes, and dignity? How far will the haves go to make sure they control it all?

Registration is open and available now at liedcenter.org/studentmatinees

Frozen Dazzles the Community with Outreach Opportunities

Disney's *Frozen* two-week run at the Lied Center Aug. 15-24 was a sparkling start to the Lied's season, filled with vibrant visuals and stunning performances. During the second week of the show's stay, there were seven outreach events to further the Lied Center's connection to the Lincoln community.

To start on Aug. 14, there was a Page to Stage Storytime at Bennett Martin Library featuring a visit from the Ice Princess. Part of the continued partnership with Lincoln City Libraries, this engagement featured snow-themed crafts, freeze dancing, and stories about princesses and sisterhood, serving 115 people.

On Aug. 19, two Q&A sessions were held for Lincoln Public School students. Sheridan Elementary School is gearing up for their own production of *Frozen Jr.* this Fall, and we were able to bring two artists to hold a Q&A with these young artists. Jasmine Swaby and Brittany Pent Rohm answered a myriad of questions that the drama class had prepared. Students asked about the artists' favorite shows and moments where they may have felt nervous to perform. To close the Q&A, Jasmine and Brittany sang "Let it Go" with the students, leaving a lasting and heartfelt impression on the *Frozen Jr.* cast. Following the Sheridan Q&A, Dylan Blussick, Laura Guley, and Matthew Fedorek met with 21 theatre students from Moore Middle School. Again, students had the opportunity to ask the *Frozen* artists about a life in theatre and what made them fall in love with it.

On Aug. 21, students who previously participated in the Lied Center Triple Threat Broadway Intensive took part in a vocal master class with Cate Hayman and Kyle Kempf. Each student prepared a 32-bar cut of music which they sang for the artists, then received constructive feedback on their performance. These master classes help provide aspiring artists with key knowledge of the performing arts world.

Two dance masterclasses were held concurrently with *Frozen* dance captain, Carly Haig, and Madysen Piper of the ensemble, on Aug. 22 at UNL's Temple building. These classes were curated for 35 intermediate dancers aged 12 and up from local dance studios.

Lastly, on Aug. 23, a local Girl Scout troop was invited to a post-show Q&A with Liz Leclerc and Laurel Denk. Laurel, the actress playing Young Elsa, is also a Girl Scout and shared her experience being in theatre at an early age. Thirty-nine students asked questions about the artists' favorite moments in the show as well as some of the biggest challenges they have overcome.

The cast's energy and passionate participation in these outreach events provided ample opportunities for the Lied Center to connect with students and community members through Lincoln community organizations such as Lincoln City Libraries, Lincoln Public Schools, the Girl Scouts, as well as numerous local dance groups.



Friends
of



Lied Center for Performing Arts
301 North 12th Street
PO Box 880151
Lincoln, NE 68588-0151
liedcenter.org/support/friends

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage Paid
Lincoln, NE
Permit No. 1034



FRIENDS OF LIED PRESENTS

Lied Royale

A Night Under the Palms

JAN 31, 2026

Friends
of



JOIN US ON JANUARY 31, 2026,
for an ultra-glamorous, high-society, vintage
tropical beach bash! This Palm Beach-themed
evening will include cocktails, live and silent
auction, a gourmet dinner and live entertainment.
It's all to support the performing arts, so dig out
your elegant duds and dancing shoes! It's sure to
be a hot, tropical night of pageantry under the
palms at the Lied Royale!

**THIS EVENT SOLD OUT LAST YEAR,
SO GET YOUR TICKETS FAST!**

Corporate sponsorships opportunities are
available through **OCTOBER 31**

Friends of Lied get early access to purchase
tickets starting **NOVEMBER 7**

Remaining tickets will be available to the
public starting **NOVEMBER 17**

For more information, visit
LIEDCENTER.ORG/GALA