

THE MUNY



MIKE ISAACSON

Artistic Director & Executive Producer

Currently in his ninth season and only the third person to hold this position in The Muny's 103-year history. To date, he has produced 56 Muny shows, 23 of which had never been on the Muny stage before. He has collaborated at The Muny with many Tony award winners and breakthrough talents, including Christian Borle, Colin Donnell, Marcia Milgrom Dodge, Gary Griffin, Heather Headley, Jennifer Holliday, Denis Jones, Laura Michelle Kelly, Dan Knechtges, Beth Leavel, Norm Lewis, Beth Malone, Kathleen Marshall, Patti Murin, Josh Rhodes, Emily Skinner and Ken Page. The Riverfront Times wrote, "Under the leadership of executive producer Mike Isaacson, the quality of Muny productions rose like the proverbial phoenix." The St. Louis Post-Dispatch named him "Theatre Artist of the Year," noting that by "staging one impressive production after another, he made The Muny simultaneously hip and – believe it – important to our community." During Isaacson's tenure, The Muny has produced new developmental productions of Irving Berlin's *Holiday Inn*, Lerner and Loewe's *Paint Your Wagon* and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. During its record-breaking 100th season, The Muny became the first theatre in the world to produce the legendary *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, doing unprecedented archival work on both the artistic and business side. During that same season, The Muny produced the U.S. regional premiere of *Jersey Boys*. Isaacson has changed the look and feel of a Muny production, overseeing a transformation in every aspect of production that culminated in 2019 with the arrival of the theatre's extraordinary James S. McDonnell stage, a state-of-the art stage house that includes revolutionary LED technology, automated sets and a host of other innovations. During the summer of 2020, when The Muny was closed due to COVID-19, Mike produced and created *The Muny 2020 Variety Hour Live!*, an online show that reached more than a worldwide audience of over 400,000.

With Kristin Caskey, Isaacson has produced more than 23 Broadway musicals and plays,

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national tours, off-Broadway and London productions. All told, his productions have received more than 122 Tony nominations and 34 Tony Awards. Last year, he produced the highly acclaimed David Byrne's *American Utopia*, which made every major "Top 10" list, and became a highly acclaimed film by Spike Lee on HBO, for which he also served as an executive producer. Just as the COVID-19 shutdown of Broadway began, he was awaiting the first preview of Neil Simon's *Plaza Suite*, starring Mathew Broderick and Sarah Jessica Parker.

Also, during the shutdown, Isaacson served as a supporting producer of the acclaimed revival of *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* at New York's Transport Group. Other career highlights include: *Fun Home* (2015 Tony Award, Best Musical; 2018 Olivier nominee for Best Musical), *Legally Blonde the Musical* (2011 Olivier Award, Best Musical), *Thoroughly Modern Millie* (2002 Tony Award, Best Musical), *Red* (2010 Tony Award, Best Play), *The Humans* (2016 Tony Award, Best Play), *If/Then*, starring Idina Menzel, Lanford Wilson's *Burn This*, starring Adam Driver and Kerri Russell (2019 Tony nomination for Best Revival of a Play), *Bring It On: The Musical* (2013 Tony nomination for Best Musical), *A Doll's House 2* (2017 Tony nomination for Best Play), *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown* (1999 Tony nomination for Best Revival of a Musical), *The Seagull*, starring Kristin Scott Thomas, Carey Mulligan and Peter Sarsgaard, *Caroline, or Change* (Tony nomination for Best Musical); *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* (2001 Tony Award, Best Revival of a Play) and *Death of a Salesman* (1999 Tony Award, Best Revival of a Play). For the Independent Presenters Network, Isaacson served as producer for *Spamalot* (2005 Tony Award, Best Musical), *Ragtime* (revival) and *The Color Purple* (2006 Tony nomination for Best Musical).

He has received the St. Louis Arts and Education Council's Award for Excellence in the Arts and has been awarded The Broadway League's and Theatre Development Fund's Commercial Theater Institute "Robert Whitehead" Award for excellence in producing. He has served on the board of governors and executive committee of The Broadway League and received the Samuel J. L'Hommedieu Award. He has also received the Equality Award from the St. Louis Chapter of Human Rights Campaign.

SP2021