



CSC

2024 GALA

HONORING
FRANK DILELLA &
NIKKI M. JAMES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2024
CITY WINERY

ClassicStage.org

WELCOME FROM YOUR GALA CHAIRS

Welcome to Classic Stage Company's 2024 Gala, where we are honoring Nikki M. James and Frank DiLella!

We are thrilled to host you this evening as we celebrate these two outstanding individuals. They have not only made significant contributions to the theater but also advocate for inclusivity and accessibility within our community. It is fitting that we recognize, alongside Nikki and Frank, Classic Stage Company's commitment to community engagement and the impact we are making in New York City through our educational programs. Your generosity tonight will enable us to welcome even more students and continue to make our theater open and accessible to all.

CSC is a unique theater where you can experience classic stories told in imaginative new ways, all within one of the most intimate venues in New York City. We hope you'll visit our theater soon to see for yourself what a truly special place it is.

Thank you for helping us make this Gala celebration a memorable evening!

ILYSSA COGHLAN

Gala Co-Chair



MATTHEW GROSSMAN

Gala Co-Chair



**ALISON HAGGERTY
STEVENSON**

Gala Co-Chair



A MESSAGE FROM PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JILL RAFSON

Welcome to Classic Stage Company's 2024 Gala! We have an incredible night planned as we honor two remarkable individuals who have brought both immense talent and personal warmth to their careers, evident in the many friends who will perform in their tribute. CSC is privileged to collaborate with Frank, who highlights theater in the press when it often might go unnoticed. Nikki, a member of our Board of Directors, plays a vital role in ensuring that Classic Stage Company prioritizes its mission of bringing classical works to all.

In the 2024-2025 season, CSC will continue its tradition of theatrical excellence with mainstage productions of classic plays. We will also enrich students through educational programs at schools that would not otherwise offer theater education, and we are launching initiatives to support engagement with the “should-have-been” classic plays in New York that have often been overlooked, by examining them from fresh perspectives through exciting directorial visions and brand new adaptations. None of this would be possible without your support, for which I am extremely grateful.

I hope you enjoy the evening, and after our gala, I encourage you to make plans to see us. There is so much happening at CSC, and I can't wait to host you at one of our upcoming readings, concerts, or productions. Thank you for believing in CSC and our mission. I look forward to seeing you at the theater soon!



JILL RAFSON
Producing Artistic Director



THIS EVENING'S PROGRAM

DIRECTED BY Daniel Goldstein

HOSTED BY Jenn Collela & Michael James Scott

APPEARANCES BY

Yassmin Alers

Charl Brown

Tituss Burgess

Laura Benanti

Caissie Levy

Norm Lewis

Judith Light

Andy Mientus

Andrew Rannells

Pearl Sun

Shaina Taub

Ana Villafañe

MUSIC DIRECTION BY Charlie Alterman

BASS Mary Ann McSweeney

DRUMS Eric Halvorson

GUITAR Kevin Ramessar

STAGE MANAGED BY Jason Weixelman

WELCOME

Jill Rafson

REMARKS

Emma Taylor
Board Chair

CSC HONORS

Nikki M. James

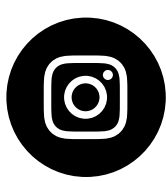
AUCTION

Sophie Colgan
Auctioneer

CSC HONORS

Frank DiLella

Use **#CSCGala** on social media to see pictures from this evening.



#CSCGala

SPECTRUM **NY**
NEWS 1

IS PROUD TO SUPPORT
THE CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY
AND CONGRATULATES HONOREE
FRANK DILELLA



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THE MENU

FIRST COURSE

Baby Lettuce Salad (Vegetarian)

Gala apple, candied pecans, goat cheese,
champagne vinaigrette

SECOND COURSE

Seared Salmon (Gluten Free)

Charred lemon, beurre blanc, broccolini

OR

Hanger Steak (Gluten Free)

Chimichurri, duck fat fingerling potatoes

DESSERT COURSE

Vanilla Bean Cheesecake

Mixed berry compote, whipped cream, fresh fruit

Please consult your server with any dietary needs.

SUPPORT CSC

Please take a moment to fill out your pledge
card, located on the back of your seating card,
or donate online at classicstage.org/donate.

[DONATE NOW](#)

ABOUT CSC'S EDUCATION PROGRAM

CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY EDUCATION & OUTREACH PROGRAMMING

INSPIRING A LOVE OF THEATER

Education is at the core of CSC's service to the public. Throughout the years, CSC has served over 45,000 students through education programs that provide in-depth training and exposure to all aspects of the theater industry. CSC provides essential artistic experiences to local students that offer them an outlet for creative expression and appreciation for theater.

Our programs include:

AFTER-SCHOOL CLASSICAL THEATER

Middle school students work to command complex texts by supplementing their in-class work on classical texts with an in-depth, multiweek residency culminating in a final presentation at CSC's theater. In recent years, the program explored themes of "honor" and "power" with works by Ana Caro Mallén de Soto, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, and William Shakespeare.

ENRICHMENT WORKSHOPS

CSC teaching artists lead rigorous and fun in-school and after-school workshops for middle and high school students. Our workshops give students the opportunity to embody the ideas they are learning about with their classroom teachers.

NEXTGEN

Our free high school program, NextGen, gives students who are considering a career in theater incredible behind-the-scenes access at our Off-Broadway theater. NextGen members meet and participate in workshops with theater professionals to learn hands-on about the many roles in a life in the theater.

PRE-PROFESSIONAL ACTOR TRAINING PROGRAM

Suitable for serious high school students, CSC's pre-professional actor training program prepares young actors for careers in theater, film, and television. CSC is currently partnering with Exploring the Arts on a three-year program with a cohort of high school students from across the five boroughs. Students begin the program as sophomores and graduate as seniors. The curriculum covers archetypes, physical theater, audition technique, voice and breath, scene study, script analysis, genre/style, the industry, and more, done through an intersectional lens that values equity and diversity.

STUDENT MATINEES

Because we value the next generation of theatergoers, CSC presents at least two student matinee performances for every production in our season. Tickets for these performances are highly subsidized and include an inspiring post-performance conversation with artists from the show as well as an in-depth show guide.

Congratulations
to this year's
honoree,
Frank Dilella

SANDRA AND
HOWARD HOFFEN



NIKKI M. JAMES



HONOREE

Nikki M. James was nominated for her performance as Ida B. Wells in *Suffs*, currently running at the Music Box Theater. She originated the role of Nabalungi in *The Book of Mormon*, for which she won the Tony for Best Featured Actress in a Musical.

Favorite theater credits include Tony Kushner's *A Bright Room Called Day* (Public), Broadway productions of *Les Misérables*, *All Shook Up* and *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *Bubbly Black Girl Sheds Her Chameleon Skin* (Encores!), *Romeo & Juliet*, *Caesar & Cleopatra* alongside Christopher Plummer (Stratford Theater), *The Wiz* (La Jolla Playhouse), *Julius Caesar*, *Twelfth Night* (Shakespeare in the Park), *Bernarda Alba* (Lincoln Center), and *Preludes* (LCT3).

Recent notable work in television includes "Severance" (AppleTV+) and starring roles in "Proven Innocent" for FOX and CBS's quirky series "Braindead." She can be seen in the upcoming Disney+ show "Daredevil."

As a director, Nikki has helmed episodes of "The Bite" and "The Good Fight." She served as an assistant director to Michael Arden for the Broadway revival of *Once On This Island* and *A Christmas Carol* live capture starring Jefferson Mays.

She resides in New York City with her family and holds a BFA in Drama from NYU. She is a proud voter and a sustaining member of her local public radio station.

@nikkimjames

FRANK DiLELLA



HONOREE

Frank DiLella is a seasoned journalist with over two decades of experience covering New York City’s vibrant entertainment community. Known for his insightful interviews and comprehensive coverage as the host of “On Stage” on Spectrum News NY1, DiLella has established himself as a prominent voice in New York City’s arts and entertainment scene.

Throughout his career, DiLella has conducted interviews with many legendary artists, including Tom Hanks, Vanessa Redgrave, Bono, Nathan Lane, Elton John, Ryan Murphy, Liza Minnelli, Patti LuPone, Bette Midler, Bernadette Peters, Hugh Jackman, Tom Stoppard, Lin-Manuel Miranda, James Earl Jones, Chita Rivera, Alicia Keys, Jane Fonda, Jake Gyllenhaal, Samuel L. Jackson, Jessica Chastain, Angela Lansbury, Judith Light, Kristin Chenoweth, Idina Menzel, Lady Gaga, Tony Kushner, and Andrew Lloyd Webber.

His work has been recognized with numerous awards, including 11 New York Emmy Awards, 8 New York Press Club Awards, and an Edward R. Murrow Award. In 2022, he was honored by the Association of LGBTQ+ Journalists for his Spectrum News Special, “Pride and Perseverance.”

Beyond his work at NY1 News, DiLella has contributed to various outlets, including the Tony Awards, the Olivier Awards, Playbill, MANHATTAN Magazine, and Broadway Direct. He regularly appears on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe,” where he’s been affectionately referred to as “the Broadway guy.” He has also made appearances on “The Tamron Hall Show,” Andy Cohen’s “Watch What Happens Live,” the AOL BUILD Series, BBC, CBS, NBC, CTV, and has been heard on The Broadway Podcast Network, iHeart Radio, and Sirius XM. In January 2022, DiLella executive produced and hosted the documentary “Reopening: The Broadway Revival,” featuring Sara Bareilles, Kristin Chenoweth, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and other notable theater artists. This PBS Great Performances special offered a unique glimpse into the challenges and triumphs of the Broadway industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

DiLella has also made numerous on-screen appearances, including in Ryan Murphy’s “The Prom” opposite Meryl Streep, “Smash,” “The Little Voice,” “Gossip Girl,” and “The Forty-Year-Old Version.”

Committed to fostering the next generation of artists, DiLella serves on the selection committee for the annual Clive Barnes Award and Foundation, which honors talented young professionals in dance and theater.

A graduate of Fordham University at Lincoln Center, DiLella returned to his alma mater in 2013 where he currently serves as an adjunct professor – teaching entertainment journalism.

Congratulations to
Frank DiLella, Nikki M.
James, and the entire
CSC family! Best wishes
for a wonderful season
ahead.

Ilyssa Coghlan



Congratulations
to Frank, Nikki,
and the entire
CSC team!

Therese F. Steiner



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LEAD GALA SPONSORS

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Live Auction Packages

New York Sports Fan Package



Get ready for the ultimate experience, sports enthusiasts! This incredible package offers five pairs of tickets to cheer on New York's top teams. Catch a home game at Citi Field, head to the Barclays Center for NBA action, witness the ALCS champion Yankees at Yankee Stadium, watch the Rangers face off at Madison Square Garden, and cap it off with a Jets home game at MetLife Stadium.

Whether you're a die-hard fan or looking to share unforgettable moments with a guest, this package has everything you need to experience the excitement of New York sports!

In the Pit at *Gypsy*



Everything is coming up roses with this exclusive behind-the-scenes look at one of Broadway's most famous musicals, *Gypsy*. This is a unique opportunity to sit alongside renowned music director Andy Einhorn as he conducts the show from the orchestra pit of the Majestic Theater. Experience the show from its heart, where the artistry happens—up close and personal, witnessing legendary Audra McDonald's hugely-anticipated performance from the center of the action.

This is a rare chance, a not-available-to-purchase adventure to experience the true magic of a Broadway musical from the other side of the fourth wall!

CSC Opening Night Experience with Nikki M. James



Our Honoree for the evening, the lovely Nikki M. James, is best known for her Tony Award-winning performance in the original Broadway cast of *The Book of Mormon*, starring in the 2014 revival of *Les Misérables*, and appearing in films and TV shows including *The Good Wife*, *The Good Fight*, and *Severance*. Nikki is currently starring as Ida B. Wells in *Suffs* on Broadway. And now she adds to her credits, your host.

Join Nikki for a truly unforgettable experience—an exclusive invitation for you and a party of 3 to attend the opening night performance of CSC's production of *Wine in the Wilderness* on March 24, 2025. Enjoy premium seating in CSC's theater alongside this Broadway star and gain bragging rights as her guest at the after-party!

This is an evening you'll be talking about for many years to come.

On Broadway with Frank DiLella



You will be ON STAGE with Frank DiLella as the host for the evening. Join our Honoree, Frank, for a memorable night filled with dinner, a show, and the best theater conversation you could ask for!

You'll be alongside Frank, a trusted friend and confidant within the theater and entertainment communities in New York City and worldwide, as you enjoy your choice of either *Gypsy* or *Sunset Boulevard*. Before the performance, you'll savor dinner and discuss all things theater, maybe even with some juicy backstage gossip!

This is your chance to get the inside scoop from this renowned reporter, with this exclusive opportunity available only at our auction.

Congratulations to Frank, Nikki,
and the entire CSC Team! You
inspire us all! Thank you for your
creative energy and intrepid
leadership!

Tysha Scott
CSC Board Member

Congratulations to
Frank DiLella, Nikki M. James,
and the entire CSC family!
Best wishes for a wonderful
season ahead.

Raymond DiPrinzio

Congratulations to
Frank, Nikki, and the
entire CSC team!

Steve & Donna
Rabinowitz

Congratulations to Classic Stage
Company, Frank DiLella, and
Nikki M. James!

We are honored to support
CSC.

Myra Maultasch & Adam Sherman

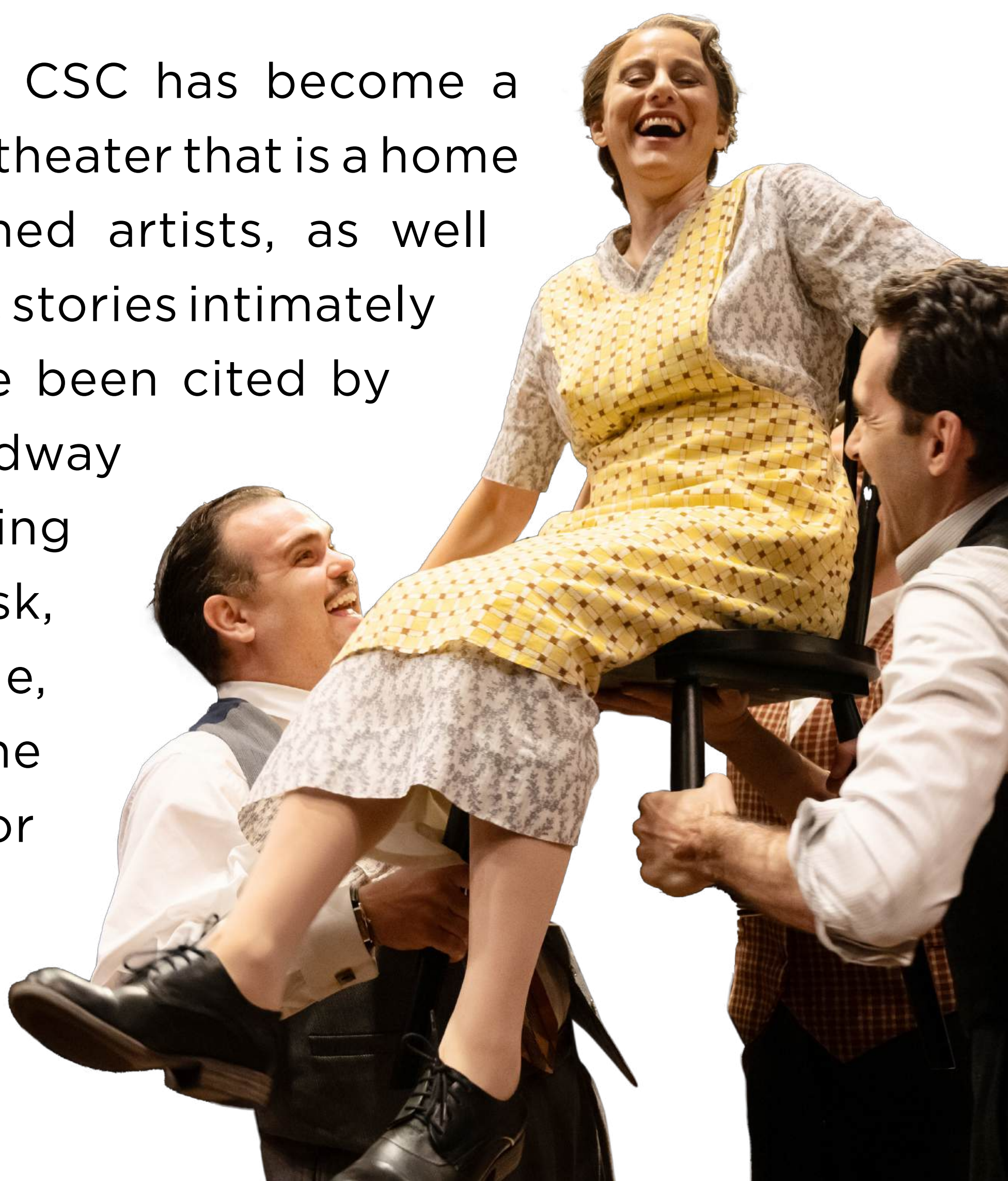
OUR MISSION

Classic Stage Company (CSC) challenges the traditional perception of classic work by exploring and reimagining great stories across the world's repertoire that illuminate our common humanity. As a home for the classics, we collaborate with artists to produce work that is inclusive, relevant and accessible. We believe that theater can both reflect and improve our society by reaching across cultural divides in order to foster shared empathy and understanding.

ABOUT CSC

In 1967, director Christopher Martin founded CSC Repertory in a 100-seat theater at Rutgers Presbyterian Church on West 73rd Street. Following short stints in small spaces, CSC grew to the point where it needed a permanent home. In 1973, the theater moved to its present premises on 13th Street, an intimate space that was formerly an East Village carriage house.

In the 55 years since, CSC has become a leading Off-Broadway theater that is a home for new and established artists, as well audiences seeking epic stories intimately told. Productions have been cited by all major Off-Broadway theater awards including the Obie, Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle, Drama League, and the Lucille Lortel Award for Outstanding Body of Work.



UP NEXT AT CSC

WINE IN THE WILDERNESS

by ALICE CHILDRESS

directed by LACHANZE

starring



OLIVIA WASHINGTON



TRAMELL TILLMAN

NOW ON SALE EXCLUSIVELY TO CSC DONORS
PUBLIC ON SALE DECEMBER 2 PREVIEWS BEGIN MARCH 6

UP NEXT

CSC

OLD FRIENDS
NEW CLASSICS

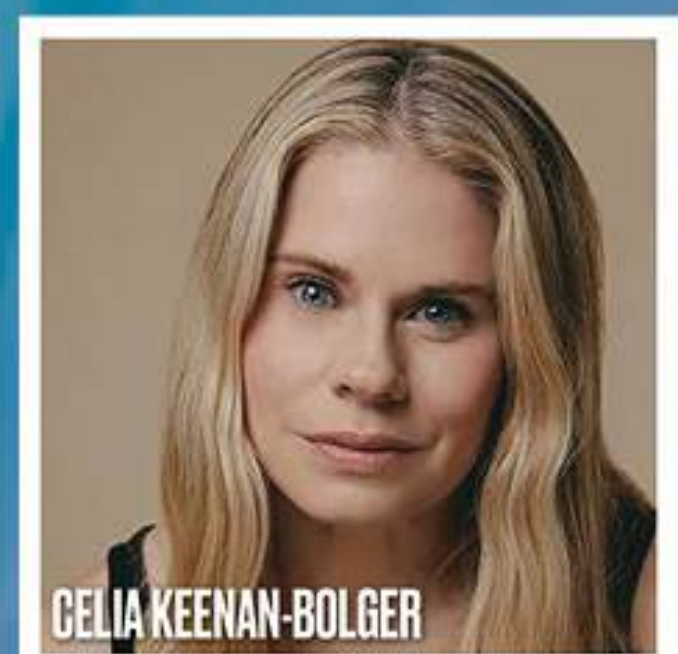
AFTER PETER

starring

written by ADAM CHANLER-BERAT
music & lyrics by GRACE McLEAN
directed by TYLER THOMAS



KYLE BELTRAN



CELIA KEENAN-BOLGER

ONE-NIGHT-ONLY MONDAY, DECEMBER 9

Congratulations to
Frank and Nikki and
to CSC!

The DiLella Family

Congratulations to
Frank DiLella, Nikki M. James,
and the entire CSC family!
Best wishes for a wonderful
season ahead.

Paul Blackman

Congratulations to Classic
Stage Company, Frank DiLella,
and Nikki M. James!

We are honored to support
CSC.

Kathy & Curtis Robb

Congratulations to
Frank DiLella, Nikki M. James,
and the entire CSC family!
Best wishes for a wonderful
season ahead.

Matt Benjamin & Yeeta Yeger

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Interim Director of
Development

John Nehlich

Facilities Manager

Kevin O'Hora

Grants Manager

Jason White

House Manager

**Congratulations to
Frank, Nikki, and the
entire CSC team!**

**Cynthia & Gregory
Taylor**





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Congratulations to
Frank, Nikki, and the
entire CSC team!

Carmen Chan

Congratulations to
Frank DiLella, Nikki M. James,
and the entire CSC family!
Best wishes for a wonderful
season ahead.

Jonathan West

Congratulations to
Classic Stage Company,
Frank DiLella, and
Nikki M. James!

We are honored to
support CSC.

David Arons &
Jake Poses





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by the classics in a fresh new light.

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THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO MADE THIS EVENT POSSIBLE!

Natalie Ault, Dawn Garvey and the entire team at City Winery, Eric Emch, Ryan Pointer, Savannah Sanchez, Mark Travis

AND TO THOSE WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY DONATED TO OUR AUCTION:

Barclays, Matt Benjamin, Rebekah Santiago-Berger, Frank DiLella, Andy Einhorn, Nikki M. James, Jim Parsons, Tysha Scott, Kate & Mike Sullivan, Emma Taylor, Jeffrey Richards, and the teams at MAYBE HAPPY ENDING and OUR TOWN, Sean Hudock & Matthew Masten, TT Partners & *The Hills of California* Team.

We proudly congratulate
our friend and client

FRANK DILELLA



Congratulations to Classic Stage Company, Frank DiLella, and Nikki M. James!

We are honored to support CSC.

Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP



No Guarantees

celebrates

FRANK DILELLA

*and his incredible and impactful
contributions to the theatre community.
We raise a glass tonight in his honor!*

Congrats to Nikki and Frank!
And thank you to the gala chairs
and the CSC board for all of
their commitment and
dedication to this night and CSC!

Emma Taylor

Congratulations to Classic
Stage Company, Frank DiLella,
and Nikki M. James!

We are honored to support
CSC.

Alison Haggerty Stevenson

Congratulations to
Nikki M James
On This Well Deserved Honor



PARADIGM TALENT AGENCY



2024 GALA

THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING THE
CSC 2024 GALA
AND FOR YOUR
SUPPORT OF
CSC



CLASSIC STAGE COMPANY

ClassicStage.org