

The History of *The Acting Company* —the magic of theatre started here.



1984 was the beginning. Founders, Curt Schroeder, Pat Hill and Dexter Black, never envisioned the organization they started would become a community theater. With the assistance of local attorney Perry Parker, a nonprofit charitable organization was incorporated.

At that time, the organization was named Theater '86 with the naive optimism that by that date a home for the performing arts would be financed and built. The first board of directors were Curt Schroeder, President; Dexter Black, Vice President; Joan Young, Secretary; Beryl Burtis, Treasurer; Pat Hill, Mike Vinsonhaler; Laura Gobel; Iola Covington; Laverne Grell; Perry Parker; Tom Pfeffer; George Garcia; Jean Cellini; David Wheeler; Monteze Hamilton and Bill Young.

In October 1987, Theater '86 staged its first show, *You Can't Take It With You*, in the Yuba City High School cafeteria. It was directed by Dexter Black, a graduate of Stanford University, who suffered an aneurysm during the run of the show and died. His dedication to the performing arts will long be remembered.

Having no permanent home, Theater '86 staged shows at The Refuge, the Yuba City Women's Club, Yuba City High School and Gray Avenue Middle School. A place of our own in which to store props and costumes was greatly needed; a space to rehearse and perform without inconveniencing others.

In 1992, we found 815 B Street. The building had been a grocery store, a high school operated restaurant, a commercial restaurant, a photography studio and a deli. And then it was ours. The ink was barely dry on the lease before we made a deal with our landlord to purchase the building.

The place was a mess. There was no stage and no seating. We had a mortgage to pay, and we rolled up our sleeves. Temporary walls came down. Concrete was jack hammered and replaced. We shored up the foundation and installed rest rooms. The dairy case and meat locker were removed. When the dust settled, we were ready for our first show.

Our Town, directed by Curt Schroeder, was chosen because it didn't require a set. Every Friday, we borrowed chairs for our audience from Ullrey Memorial Chapel and every Sunday we returned them.

We paid the monthly mortgage by staging shows and fund raising. Curt Schroeder wrote and directed ELLY Award winning shows. Pat Hill directed children's shows at the Prune Festival. Jamie Ferreira, Phil Perry, Janice Hoberg, and Karyn Donahue directed shows. Board members brought in toilet paper and paper towels and our meager profits were used to launch more productions.

Volunteers are the backbone of our theater. Our first volunteers included spouses, friends, neighbors, and Rotarians who refurbished and installed risers for donated theater seats. Our "light booth" was in the transom over the front door—complete with ladder. We installed used carpet and purple drapes donated by Movies 8. Richard Betournay designed, painted and installed our sign.

We produced plays, added actors, built our volunteer base and pulled in directors including Ric Young, Cecilia Chafin, Neil Thorson, Nora LeBarton, Foster McManus, Pierette Jensen and Staci Johnson. And we grew; and in 1983, we became The Acting Company.

Within seven years the mortgage was paid so we made the obvious decision to go \$300,000 in debt. We built a serviceable green room, laid a proper stage, installed a sound and light booth, purchased and installed stadium seating, and upgraded the electrical system. Our contractor discovered previously undetected dry rot and absorbed \$10,000 in renovation costs. Later \$12,000 went into our new lobby and \$10,000 into the actors green room.

Over the years, past presidents included Curt Schroeder, Pat Hill, Ric Young, Shirley Watson, Foster Campbell, Staci Johnson, Bob Harlan, Debbie Collier, Lisa Buschmann and Jamie Ferreira.

2014 marked the 30th Anniversary of The Acting Company's incorporation, and we had a lot to celebrate. Magic Theater, the children's arm of The Acting Company, acquired a program director and expanded the number of shows each year to five. Summer acting workshops and Saturday classes for children are a great success, often with long waiting lists.

In 2024, we celebrated our 40th Anniversary! We made upgrades in sound, lights, stage flooring, ticket management and the continued growth of our Magic Theater to include the Yuba-Sutter Charter School. Our children are our future.

OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS: Actors, Directors, Music Directors, Stage Managers, Musicians, Choreographers, Dancers, Artistic Designers, Set Designers, Artistic Painters, Our IT Guy, Light Designers, Sound Designers, Light Technicians, Sound Technicians, Carpenters, Set Builders, Set Painters, Costumers, Seamstresses, Poster Designers, Photographers, Properties Personnel, Hair Designers, Make up Designers, Back Stage Helpers, House Managers, Cleaning Personnel, Maintenance Personnel, Marketing Personnel — **MAKE OUR SHOWS POSSIBLE!**

The "magic of theater" happens through the generous support of our patrons, local businesses and organizations. Together we continue to produce quality performing arts productions and offer opportunities that bolster teamwork, imagination, confidence, self esteem and artistic talent.

***The actor creates with his own flesh and blood all those things which all the arts try in some way to describe.*—Lee Strasberg**