



## Milwaukee Repertory Theater Announces 2026/27 Season

**An Expanded Lineup of 13 Bold Contemporary Plays, World Premieres, Musicals and Returning Favorites across the Checota Powerhouse Theater, Herro-Franke Studio Theater, Stackner Cabaret, and Pabst Theater**

**February 3, 2026 (Milwaukee, WI)** – [Milwaukee Repertory Theater](#), Wisconsin's largest performing arts organization and one of the nation's leading regional theaters, today announced its 2026/27 Season—its second full season in the state-of-the-art Associated Bank Theater Center. Building on the momentum of this year's inaugural slate, the new season showcases a mix of Broadway hits, world premieres, intimate new works, and audience favorites across four performance venues.

The 73<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary Season runs September 2026 through May 2027 and reflects Milwaukee Rep's commitment to producing entertaining, provoking, and inspiring theater that sparks conversation and celebrates the diverse stories of the community.

"With our 2026/27 Season, we continue to discover what's possible inside the recently opened Associated Bank Theater Center," said Artistic Director **Mark Clements**. "With an expanded 13 production season, including three new plays, one in each of our performance spaces, every production reflects the heart of Milwaukee Rep with bold new award-winning voices, world-class artistry, and stories that celebrate the full spectrum of our shared humanity."

"Milwaukee Rep's modernized and expanded home at The Associated Bank Theater Center provides world-class performance spaces in which we can produce the best of American theater," said Ellen & Joe Checota Executive Director **Chad Bauman**. "This coming season, we will produce more productions than ever before as we continue to showcase brilliant, boundary-pushing, and deeply challenging work in a space that has quickly become a hub for the community, a place where everyone feels welcome and inspired, and a theater where artists can do their best work."

### **The 2026/27 Season highlights:**

- Three major new-play development projects through the John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Program—including two **World Premieres** (*The Cherry Tortured* and *MKE MVP*) and continued development of the genre-bending *Instructions for a Séance*.
- A Broadway powerhouse lands in Milwaukee with the seven-time Tony Award–nominated hit ***John Proctor Is the Villain***.
- A landmark special event: Mark Clements directs a star-studded Wisconsin cast in the iconic courtroom drama ***Twelve Angry Men*** as part of a new 3-play Herro-Franke Studio Theater season.

- A high-voltage musical opener as ***Footloose*** storms the Checota Powerhouse stage under the direction and choreography of Olivier Award-winner **Stephen Mear**.
- A beloved holiday tradition returns as ***A Christmas Carol*** once again fills the historic Pabst Theater featuring Matt Daniels as Scrooge.

The **Stackner Cabaret** launches the season with the high-energy Broadway celebration ***The World Goes 'Round*** by Kander and Ebb, running September 11 – November 1, 2026. Reconfigured as an actor-musician performance and featuring iconic songs from *Chicago*, *Cabaret*, and more, this vibrant revue sets the tone for an unforgettable year. Next, audiences are treated to the return of JP Coletta—who brought the house down in last season's *Million Dollar Quartet*—in his brand-new show ***JP Coletta's Rock 'N' Roll Piano Man***, November 6, 2026 – January 3, 2027. The momentum continues with the World Premiere of Matt Zambrowski's ***MKE MVP***, a spirited tribute to the Milwaukee Bucks championship run told through the eyes of devoted fans, January 16 – March 14, 2027. Closing out the Stackner season is the beloved hit ***The Craic***, back by popular demand March 26 – May 30, 2027. Sing along to classics like “Danny Boy” and “Whiskey in the Jar” and relive the electric atmosphere that had audiences on their feet.

The **Herro-Franke Studio Theater** presents an expanded three production offering highlighting bold voices and intimate storytelling. The season begins with ***Instructions for a Séance***, written and performed by Katie Bender, October 6 – November 8, 2026. Equal parts hilarious, haunting, and heartbreakingly honest, this one-woman show blends memoir and live magic to explore ambition, motherhood, and the extraordinary hidden in everyday life. The Studio then hosts ***Twelve Angry Men***, directed by Mark Clements, February 2 -28, 2027, and featuring a powerhouse cast of Wisconsin favorites including Matt Daniels, Steve Koehler, James Pickering, Marcus Truschinski, Jonathan Wainwright, and more. This is a rare opportunity to see this epic courtroom drama in the intimate Studio Theater. The Studio season concludes with ***Penelope***, directed by Laura Braza and running April 6 – May 9, 2027. Inspired by *The Odyssey*, this captivating one-woman journey fuses myth, music, and theatrical invention.

The five-show **Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater Season** begins with the smash-hit musical ***Footloose***, bursting onto the stage with high-octane choreography and electrifying '80s anthems September 22 – November 1, 2026. Directed by West End legend Stephen Mear—who dazzled Rep audiences with *Ragtime* and *Guys & Dolls*—this production promises a thrilling start. Next up is ***Heist*** by Arun Lakra, November 17 – December 20, 2026, directed by Blake Robison. A cinematic, twist-filled crime caper, *Heist* blends the slick fun of *Ocean's Eleven* with the intrigue of a classic whodunnit. The new year brings a bold contemporary reimagining with ***John Proctor Is the Villain***, January 12 – February 7, 2027. Directed by Laura Braza, this seven-time 2025 Tony Award nominee offers a sharp, provocative look at morality and consequence. The season continues with the World Premiere of ***The Cherry Tortured***, written and directed by Aaron Posner, February 26 – March 28, 2027. Set in modern-day Door County, this fresh take on Chekhov follows one unforgettable family fighting for love, legacy, and the future of their cherished estate. Closing the Powerhouse season is ***Somewhere*** by Tony Award-winning playwright Matthew López, directed by María Amenábar Farias, April 13 – May 9, 2027. Set in 1959 New York City against the excitement of *West Side Story*, this tender, riveting portrait of the Candelaria family celebrates dreams, resilience, and the power of imagination.

**Subscriptions** are now available for renewal. Subscription prices for the 2026/27 Season range from \$125-\$857. Packages available are the Ultimate 11-play package, which includes the entire Subscription season spanning all three of Milwaukee Rep's performance spaces; Powerhouse/Stackner Cabaret 9-play package; Powerhouse/Studio 7-play package; Powerhouse 5-play package; Stackner Cabaret 4-Play package as well as a Create Your Own Season package and Flex Passes. Subscribers can also add *A Christmas Carol* and *Twelve Angry Men* to their packages at this time. Single Tickets will go on sale later in the summer. For additional information on Subscription offerings, please contact Milwaukee Rep's Ticket Office at 414-224-9490 or visit [www.MilwaukeeRep.com/Subscriptions](http://www.MilwaukeeRep.com/Subscriptions).



**2026/27 Season**

### ***The World Goes 'Round***

Music by John Kander | Lyrics by Fred Ebb  
Conceived by Susan Stroman, David Thompson and Scott Ellis  
Directed & Choreographed by Kelley Faulkner  
September 11 – November 1, 2026  
Stackner Cabaret

### **High-Energy Broadway Celebration**

Kicking off the Stackner season, this high-energy musical revue brings to life the legendary songs of John Kander and Fred Ebb, the iconic duo behind the musicals *Chicago*, *Cabaret* and *Kiss of the Spider Woman*. Featuring 36 unforgettable songs, five dynamic performers deliver beloved favorites with heart and show-stopping style. The music moves seamlessly from sizzling showstoppers to intimate, moving moments that reveal the depth of the duo's remarkable collection of songs. From razor-sharp humor to powerful storytelling, this celebration is pure Broadway joy from start to finish.

### ***Footloose***

Stage Adaptation by Dean Pitchford and Walter Bobbie  
Based on the original screenplay by Dean Pitchford  
Music by Tom Snow | Lyrics by Dean Pitchford  
Additional Music by Eric Carmen, Sammy Hagar, Kenny Loggins, and Jim Steinman  
Directed & Choreographed by Stephen Mear  
September 22 – November 1, 2026  
Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater

### **The Music. The Magic. The '80s**

Get ready to kick off your heels and feel the beat! The smash-hit film *Footloose* explodes onto the stage with high-octane choreography and electrifying '80s anthems, including "Let's Hear It for the Boy" and

“Holding Out for a Hero.” When city teen Ren moves to a small town where dancing is banned, he challenges the rules, sparks romance, and inspires a community to rediscover joy, freedom, and the power of music. Helmed by Olivier Award-winning artist Stephen Mear, who wowed Rep audiences with his choreography for *Ragtime* and *Guys and Dolls*, this energetic, feel-good Tony-nominated musical will have you laughing, cheering, and jumping to your feet.

### ***Instructions for a Séance***

Written & Performed by Katie Bender

Directed by Lily Wolff

October 6 – November 8, 2026

Herro-Franke Studio Theater

*A John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Production*

### **Houdini, Motherhood And Mayhem**

Step into an unforgettable adventure of mystery, mischief, and messy humanity. Katie Bender transforms the theater into an intimate DIY séance, daring to summon the spirit of Houdini—and maybe wrestle with the chaos of her own life along the way. Equal parts hilarious, haunting, and heartbreakingly honest, this one-woman show fuses memoir and live magic to explore ambition, motherhood, and the craving to break free. Expect laughter and glimpses of the extraordinary hidden in everyday life.

### ***JP Coletta's Rock 'N' Roll Piano Man***

Created by JP Coletta

November 6, 2026 – January 3, 2027

Stackner Cabaret

### **Epic Songs. Electric Energy. One Unforgettable Show.**

Step into a world of high-octane piano and legendary hits! *Rock 'N' Roll Piano Man* takes you on a thrilling journey through the history of rock 'n' roll piano—from the rebellious roots of Little Richard and Fats Domino to the soulful sounds of Ray Charles, and piano legends Elton John and Billy Joel. JP Coletta, who brought down the house as Jerry Lee Lewis in *Million Dollar Quartet*, and his band bring each song to life with electrifying energy, dazzling skill, and irresistible charisma. Experience classics like “Great Balls of Fire,” “Benny and the Jets” and “Always A Woman” in an unforgettable tribute to the music that shaped generations.

### ***Heist***

By Arun Lakra

Directed by Blake Robison

November 17 – December 20, 2026

Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater

### **High-Tech Thrills. High-Stakes Laughs.**

A crew with secrets. One last job that could change everything. *Heist* is a cinematic, twist-filled crime caper brought vividly to life on stage — part *Ocean's Eleven*, part mystery-whodunnit, and all heart-pounding theatrical adventure. Featuring sharp dialogue, clever surprises, and unexpected laughs, it

takes you on a thrilling ride that keeps you guessing until the final moment. Perfect for the holiday season, it's the ultimate escape into suspense, humor, and high-tech fun.

### ***John Proctor is the Villain***

By Kimberly Belflower

Directed by Laura Braza

January 12 – February 7, 2027

Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater

### **A Bold, Contemporary Twist On A Classic Story**

Broadway smash hit and seven-time 2025 Tony Award nominee *John Proctor Is the Villain* is a sharp, provocative reexamination of morality and consequence. Set in a modern high school classroom, students collide over truth, power, and whose voices actually get heard. Funny, fearless, and bursting with energy, this contemporary take flips familiar ideas on their head and tackles today's most urgent questions—leaving you laughing, gasping, and talking long after you leave the theater.

### ***MKE MVP***

Book, Music & Lyrics by Matt Zembrowski

January 16 – March 14, 2027

Stackner Cabaret

*A John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Production*

### **A New Musical Celebration Of A Championship Team**

From the creator of the sold-out hit *Dad's Season Tickets*, comes a World Premiere musical comedy that celebrates the Milwaukee Bucks unforgettable championship journey through the eyes of a close-knit group of lifelong fans. From the arrival of a franchise-changing MVP in 2013, to the final buzzer in the Summer of 2021, the glorious end of a 50-year wait reveals how one extraordinary season, one electrifying talent, and the exceptional people around us — can make a lasting impact on our lives. Joyful, funny and full of hometown pride, sports fans and theater fans won't want to miss this musical that captures the soul of our city when its team took the world stage.

### ***The Cherry Tortured***

Written & Directed by Aaron Posner

February 26 – March 28, 2027

Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater

*A John (Jack) D. Lewis New Play Development Production*

### **Chekhov's Classic. Door County Freshness.**

Milwaukee Rep favorite Aaron Posner (*The Chosen*) returns for the World Premiere of his gloriously funny, brilliantly sharp reimagining of Chekhov's masterpiece, *The Cherry Orchard*. Set in modern day Door County, one unforgettable family fights for love, legacy, and tradition as the future of their beloved family estate teeters on the edge of change. *The Cherry Tortured* is the latest in Posner's award-winning series of bold and clever Chekhovian adaptations that rank among the most produced plays in the country — and you can be the first to see this cheeky, free-spirited take on an all-time classic.

## ***The Craic***

By Mark Clements and Deanie Vallone

Directed by Mark Clements

March 26 – May 30, 2027

Stackner Cabaret

### **Back By Popular Demand After A Sell-Out Run!**

Join the fun that made *The Craic* the biggest hit in Stackner Cabaret history. Set in a lively Irish pub, five friends share an evening full of music, stories, and unforgettable camaraderie. Enjoy classics like “Danny Boy,” and “Whiskey in the Jar,” and feel the excitement that had audiences jumping to their feet. From laughter to music-filled moments, every second is full of warmth, humor, and charm. Whether you’re returning for the experience or discovering it for the first time, this joyous celebration of friendship and laughter is pure Irish delight — Sláinte!

## ***Penelope***

Music, Lyrics & Arrangements by Alex Bechtel

Book by Alex Bechtel, Grace McLean and Eva Steinmetz

Based on writings in *The Odyssey* by Homer

Directed by Laura Braza

April 6 – May 9, 2027

Herro-Franke Studio Theater

### **The Legend You Know, The Story You’ve Never Heard**

Step into *Penelope*, where myth, music and theater collide in a captivating one-woman journey. The legendary wife of Odysseus waits, weaves and wrestles with love, loss and life on the edge of the sea. With a bourbon in hand and a three-piece band, she shares her heartache, humor and unshakable resolve with songs ranging from jazz to folk to indie rock. Confiding in us about her son, her suitors, and the faith she must place in herself, this ancient tale is reborn for a modern audience. *Penelope* is funny, heartfelt and utterly alive, asking what it truly means to wait for the ones we love.

## ***Somewhere***

By Matthew López

Directed by María Amenábar Farias

April 13 – May 9, 2027

Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater

### **Family, Hope And A Rhythm All Their Own**

From Tony Award–winning playwright Matthew Lopez comes *Somewhere*, a tender and riveting portrait of a tight-knit Puerto Rican family in 1959 New York City. Set against the excitement and energy of Broadway’s *West Side Story*, the Candelaria siblings chase their dreams of dancing on stage, buoyed by their mother’s love and infectious enthusiasm. When their building is slated for demolition to make way for Lincoln Center, the family must navigate heartbreak, hope, and the unshakable bonds that hold them together. Bursting with music, dance, humor, and heart, this joyous, moving story is a celebration of family, resilience, and the American Dream.

::Off-Subscription::

## ***A Christmas Carol***

By Charles Dickens

Adapted & Directed by Mark Clements

December 2 – 24, 2026

Pabst Theater

Presented by West Bend Insurance

## **Milwaukee's Favorite Holiday Tradition**

One night. Three spirits. A chance at redemption. Follow Ebenezer Scrooge on a magical journey that reminds us all of the power of generosity, connection and hope. Featuring Matt Daniels as Scrooge, Milwaukee Rep's *A Christmas Carol* sparkles with festive music, breathtaking visuals, dazzling stagecraft, and heart—bringing joy, wonder and the true spirit of the season to audiences of all ages.

## ***Twelve Angry Men***

By Reginald Rose

Directed by Mark Clements

February 2 – February 28, 2027

Herro-Franke Studio Theater

## **Twelve Strangers. One Impossible Choice.**

Step inside a sweltering jury room where the fate of a young defendant rests with twelve ordinary citizens. What begins as an open-and-shut case unravels into a gripping battle of logic, prejudice, and moral courage. Tensions flare, alliances shift, and the path to justice becomes anything but clear in this timeless, razor-sharp drama that feels as urgent today as ever. This all-star production featuring Wisconsin favorites, including Matt Daniels, Steve Koehler, James Pickering, Marcus Truschinski, Jonathan Wainwright and more, brings electrifying intensity and unforgettable humanity to one of the most celebrated courtroom dramas of all time.

## **About Milwaukee Repertory Theater**

Milwaukee Rep is the largest performing arts organization in Wisconsin. Its new artistic home, the Associated Bank Theater Center, opened Fall 2025 with three unique performance venues—the Ellen & Joe Checota Powerhouse Theater, Herro-Franke Studio Theater, and Stackner Cabaret. For over seven decades, Milwaukee Rep has been a centerpiece of Milwaukee's vibrant arts and cultural scene with productions ranging from Broadway musicals to Shakespeare to American Classics and New Works that are entertaining, inclusive and impactful. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Mark Clements and Executive Director Chad Bauman, Milwaukee Repertory Theater ignites positive change in the cultural, social and economic vitality of its community by creating world-class theater experiences that entertain, provoke and inspire meaningful dialogue among an audience representative of Milwaukee's rich diversity. More information visit [www.MilwaukeeRep.com](http://www.MilwaukeeRep.com)

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**2026/27 Season Media Kit**