



MGP's shows have included (from top) *Titanic* (2005), *Music Man* (1973), *Fiddler on the Roof* (1999), *Oklahoma* (1994), *Annie Get Your Gun* (1982), *Singing in the Rain* (1990) and *Anything Goes* (1989).



# Curtain Call

Community theater celebrates its golden season.

**B**ernadette Hisey has been a cast member of Mighty Goliath Productions for so long, she can't even remember the name of the first show she "starred" in with her mother.

"My mother had to sing a song pushing a stroller on stage, and supposedly, I was in the buggy. I don't remember it, but I was there," laughs Hisey, now in her 28th season with MGP. This year, Hisey will direct the company's golden anniversary production, *Ragtime the Musical* — a show at the Performing Arts Center at Avon Lake High School in which, she says, they are "pulling out all of the stops."

Over the years, the company has performed mainly traditional '40s and '50s musicals, but is now attempting to push the envelop with new selections such as last year's performance of *Titanic* and *Ragtime* this year. It will take more than 150 volunteers to put together the musical drama set in 1906 America.

"What makes us unusual is our chorus size," Hisey explains. "If you want to be in the show, you're in." While the leads must audition, the chorus, made up of about 90 people, is composed of community members of all ages.

MGP started as a PTA fundraiser of blackface minstrel shows in 1959 and has blossomed into full-fledged annual musicals that have raised more than \$146,600 for the band, choir, strings and drama departments at Avon Lake High School. The funds raised are divided equally among the four groups.

During Hisey's career, she has been a director, music director, leading lady, supporting lead, dancer and chorus member. "I've been all around the block with this company," she says. Her parents were involved with the show and so are her children. Hisey is just one of the many families who have had generation after generation in the company at MGP.

"I grew up watching those shows. As a child, it was the only company I saw, and all I remember is I wanted to do that," says Hisey, an elementary music teacher who has also appeared in performances in Cain Park, Cassidy Theatre and the Jewish Community Center. One of seven children, Hisey grew up in a family of musicians — and she fittingly married one as well. Her husband, Ernest Hisey, a retired music professor from Cleveland State University and former Avon Lake High School music teacher, is this year's musical director.

"It's like my extended family," she says. "They've seen me grow up, and I can't wait to get back to it."

*Ragtime the Musical* will run Feb. 27 and 28 and March 1, 6 and 7. For ticket information, go to [mightygoliath.com](http://mightygoliath.com).

— Beth Stallings