



MARK DANNI LEADING WITH VISION THROUGH MUSICAL THEATRE

“When people walk into the theatre, I want them to leave the world outside for a while — to laugh, feel something real, and remember how powerful live performance can be.”

Mark Danni, founding artistic director of TheatreZone, Naples’ premier professional musical theatre, has built a career defined by artistry, mentorship, and vision. A Buffalo, New York native, he began playing drums at age 10 and was performing with theatre “pit” orchestras as a teenager, setting the foundation for a life in music and storytelling.

After earning a Bachelor of Music Education from Baldwin-Wallace University Conservatory of Music, where he was later honored with the Alumni Achievement Award, Danni toured and performed on Broadway productions including *Chicago*, *Les Misérables*, *Miss Saigon*, *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, *42nd Street*, *Hair*, *Evita*, and *The Phantom of the Opera*. While conducting the national tour of *Les Misérables*, he was encouraged to step into directing, a pivot that shaped his future in regional and Off-Broadway theatre.

That path ultimately led to Naples, where Danni and his wife, choreographer Karen Molnar Danni, relocated in 2002 to help expand the arts at Community School of Naples. Their shared passion evolved into TheatreZone, founded in 2005 as a nonprofit professional Equity company based at the school and dedicated to producing award-winning and hidden musical theatre gems.

Over the past two decades, Danni has taught more than 1,500 college and high school students while guiding TheatreZone into a respected cultural institution known for intimate productions and nationally recognized talent. From early successes such as *Mack & Mabel* starring Gary Sandy to a steady presence of professional stage veterans and icons, his leadership continues to shape Naples’ artistic landscape — rooted in the belief that musical theatre has the power to inspire, connect, and transform audiences. A sought-after speaker at community and cultural organizations, Danni is known for sharing his passion for theatre with the same warmth, humor, and insight he brings to the stage.