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### **Cathedral to be transformed into stage, dance floor for a night**

CLEVELAND – A downtown cathedral will become a stage, a dance floor and a “Dickens street party” on Saturday, Jan. 28, when a local theater holds its unusual annual fundraiser.

Near West Theatre’s 2012 benefit, “Consider Yourself One of Us,” will be from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. at Trinity Cathedral, 2230 Euclid Ave. It will feature a high-energy, original performance by NWT cast members as well as food and drink, a DJ and dancing, a silent auction and raffle, and other surprises. This year’s honoree is community activist, author, and founding NWT Board member Joanne Lewis.

“This will not be your typical Victorian-themed party,” said Artistic Director Bob Navis Jr. “The show, the environment, the street performers – all of it will create the feel of Charles Dickens’ London with a Near West Theatre edge.”

The benefit is the most important fundraiser of the year for Near West Theatre, which builds community among ordinary people by staging classic musicals with large, diverse casts of all ages and also offers children’s and youth programming. Companies and individuals are invited to consider Benefit sponsorships at levels of \$10,000, \$7,500, \$5,000, \$2,500 and \$1,000. As of Dec. 21, 2011, they include Spice of Life Catering Co., Euro USA, American Limousine Service, KeyBank, Weisman, Kennedy & Berris Co. LPA, Dominion East Ohio, Fifth Third Bank, Chuck and Rita Maimbourg, Medical Mutual, Charter One, Gypsy Beans & Baking Co., Lutheran Hospital, R.C. Distributors, Jan Roller and David Abbott, and the Sherwin-Williams Company.

Besides the evening’s entertainment, a single ticket to the event at \$85 (or 10 tickets at \$800) buys access to a festive spread of food provided by Euro USA and prepared by Spice of Life, and desserts by Gypsy Beans & Baking Co. Tickets can be purchased online [here](#); by phoning 216-961-6391, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays; or in person during those same hours at NWT’s business office, 6514 Detroit Ave. \$50 of each ticket is tax-deductible. Event details are at [www.nearwesttheatre.org/benefit.html](http://www.nearwesttheatre.org/benefit.html).

Stephanie Morrison-Hrbek, the founding and executive director of the theater since 1978, is grateful for the location of the benefit. “We love the Trinity Commons concept and the openness of the Cathedral and its people to arts, music and programs that further peace and justice, education and spiritual growth,” said. “It’s a perfect match for our approach to theater as a community-building, transformative experience.”

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