

# NAPLES

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**THE HEART OF NAPLES:**  
GIFT GIVING TRADITIONS  
DURING THE HOLIDAYS

DECEMBER 2024  
CITYLIFESTYLE.COM



Mark and Karen Danni portrait,  
Photographer Ed Chappell



*TheatreZone is Naples' Premier Professional Musical Theatre Company*

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# From Broadway to Naples

Lana Love, Voice  
star, with Mark and  
Karen Danni



From Broadway to Naples: Mark and Karen Danni's TheatreZone Celebrates 20 Years in 2025

*TheatreZone is Naples' Premier Professional Musical Theatre Company*

Mark Danni and Karen Molnar Danni are household names in Southwest Florida's theatre world. Mark, a director, conductor and percussionist, and Karen, an actress and choreographer, established Naples' TheatreZone in 2005 and are celebrating the 20th season of the theatre company in 2025.

Prior to moving to Naples, the couple enjoyed flourishing musical theatre careers in New York City on and Off-Broadway. Mark's 2019 gig playing percussion on the national tour of *Fame: The Musical* at the Naples Philharmonic (former name of Artis-Naples), brought him and Karen to Naples.

They recognized Naples as a booming town and bought a vacation home in north Naples. A series of fortunate events conspired to lure the Dannis to Naples full-time. In 2002, Mark Danni agreed to become the first director of theatre at Community School of Naples, if he could also create a professional Equity theatre company to be in residence in the theater building on the school's campus.

"We liked the idea of being 'in the zone' when you came to our productions," as Mark explains the name. Their first task was securing a contract with the Actors' Equity Association to ensure access to the country's best actors, singers, dancers, musicians, and stage management professionals. TheatreZone was the first professional Equity theatre in Naples.

Another milestone was establishing TheatreZone as a nonprofit 501(c)3 theatre in 2005. Becoming a nonprofit enabled the company to accept tax deductible



Mark Danni on tour with *Fame: The Musical*, the gig that brought the Dannis to Naples

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donations to help with production costs, staffing and keeping ticket prices affordable.

The Dannis brought passion and fire to Naples when creating TheatreZone and have drawn musical theatre luminaries to its stage from the outset.

“Our first production was Jerry Herman’s *Mack & Mabel* starring Gary Sandy, star of *WKRP In Cincinnati* and was such a success that we said let’s do another one immediately,” said Mark.

“We’ve been fortunate to cast incredible talent in our musicals, including celebrities and Broadway veterans,” Mark said. Highlights include Donna McKechnie, Tony Award-winning star of *A Chorus Line* and TV’s *Fame*;

Eddie Mekka, *Laverne & Shirley*; Georgia Engel, *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* and *Everybody Loves Raymond*; Andrea McArdle, Broadway’s original *Annie*; Nancy Dussault, *Too Close for Comfort* and the original Broadway production of *The Sound of Music*, and many more.

The 20th season musical lineup is full of passion and fun and continues the Dannis’ flair for selecting a bold and vibrant mix of a big Broadway splash (*Jersey Boys*) and three edgier gems – *Once* (a Tony Award-Winning Best Musical), Kander & Ebbs’ *The Rink*, and *Ghost: The Musical*, based on the hit movie.

For complete details and booking, visit [Theatre.Zone](http://Theatre.Zone).