

DON CHAFFER

Resume & C.V.



DON CHAFFER

4005 Twin Oaks Lane

Antioch, TN 37013

B.A. Music (UMKC)

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Experience

AS EDUCATOR (1998-PRESENT)

- **Adjunct Professor** for Lipscomb University (2020-2021); classes include:
 - Singer-Songwriter Ensemble, Songwriting II, History of Popular Music, and Intro to Music Theater Writing
- **Online Classes.** Developed, marketed, and taught paid four-week live online classes (2020-2021) through donchaffer.com:
 - Practical Music Theory I (three sections)
 - Practical Music Theory II (two sections)
 - Practical Music Theory III (two sections) starting soon.
- **Seminar leader** on songwriting, theater, and/or creativity for multiple arts conferences and events (1998-present).
- **Mentoring:** Long-term mentoring of 2 assistants—one for 9 years (2004-2013), one for 4 years (2015-2019). Neither worked in entertainment industry before; both still work in the industry as professionals now.

AS RECORDING ARTIST (1995-PRESENT)

- **Founded** the band, **Waterdeep** (1995)
- **Toured** full-time in America, and overseas (1996-2003)
- **Sold 150,000+ units** as independent artist (1996-1999)
- Signed a **record deal** with Squint Entertainment (1999-2001)
- Created an annual **music festival**, Everyone's Festival (1999-2001)
- **Recorded over 25 albums** as Waterdeep, solo, or side project (1995-present)

AS PRODUCER/ENGINEER/SONGWRITER (1995-PRESENT)

- Set up and ran **Recording Studios**
 - **The Culture House**, Olathe KS (2005-2006)
 - **The Conductor**, Kansas City, MO (2006-2009)
 - **Woodland Studio C**, Nashville, TN (2009) w/ Gillian Welch & Dave Rawlings
 - **The Conductor**, Nashville, TN (2010-present)
- **Produced, Engineered, and mixed** 75+ albums for other artists (2003-present)
- **Staff Songwriter** for **Simpleville Music**, Nashville, TN (2007-2013)
 - Multiple label cuts, radio singles, worship songs, and television placements.

AS THEATRICAL COMPOSER/LYRICIST/LIBRETTIST (2007-PRESENT)

- **Created 11 shows:** (8) Full-length musicals, (3) One-Acts, or plays with music
- Multiple **table readings** and **readings**
- 15+ **full productions**

- NYC Publisher, Concord Theatricals, **published** *Sparkley Clean Funeral Singers* (2016)

AS MUSIC DIRECTOR/ARRANGER (2013-PRESENT)

- **Capital Repertory Theatre**, Albany, NY:
 - *The Sparkley Clean Funeral Singers* (2013)
- **Studio Tenn**, Nashville, TN:
 - *Big River* (2012)
 - *The Hank Legacy* (2013)
 - *The Cash Legacy* (2014)
 - *The Hank/Cash Legacy* (2015)
 - *The Cash Legacy* (2017)
- **River & Rail Theatre Co**, Knoxville, TN:
 - *The Unusual Tale of Mary & Joseph's Baby* (2018)
- **Music directed readings** at these and other theaters (2013-present):
 - **Firebone Theatre**, NYC, NY
 - **York Theatre**, NYC, NY
 - **Florida Studio Theatre**, NYC, NY
- **Recorded & arranged all parts for completed full score** of five musicals.

AS TELEVISION WRITER (2020)

- **The Slugs & Bugs Show**
 - Staff writer for season 2, released on Right Now Media. (2020)

AS NON-PROFIT DIRECTOR (2010-PRESENT)

- **Creative Arts Initiative**, Nashville, TN (2010-present)
 - Consulted for founding/vision by founder, Kirk Dahlgren (2008-2009)
 - Assumed directorship (2010)
 - Re-worked vision, re-launched fundraising (2019)

AS CEO (1995-PRESENT)

- **Hey Ruth Music**, KC, MO; Wichita, KS; Nashville, TN (1995-present)
 - **Managed and ran business for activities as recording artist**, including: hiring/firing, deal negotiation, merchandise sales, website, marketing, publishing, publishing admin, and booking. [*Waterdeep and/or Hey Ruth Inc. has had: management, label, publishing, admin and/or booking at various times. When we didn't, I either performed these duties, or managed an in-house team who did.*]
- **DCPI**, Nashville, TN (2015-2018)
 - **Created a model for investment in content creation**, and received three years' salary from investors to fund creation of new properties.
- **Unusual Tale Tour, LLC**, Nashville, TN (2018)

- Acted as CEO of commercial tour of *The Unusual Tale of Mary & Joseph's Baby*.
- Created pitch deck, launched, assisted in fundraising, and produced this investor-funded venture starting in winter, 2018.

IN MARKETING / CROWDFUNDING / VIDEO / WEBSITE CONSTRUCTION

- Created **Crowdfunding videos, campaigns, & fulfillment plans** (Kickstarter & Indiegogo).
 - **Firebone Theatre** (2011)
 - **Waterdeep** (2014)
 - **Geoff Moore** (2015)
 - **Ben Kilgore** (2015) *Did not create campaign and fulfillment system; only video.*
 - **River & Rail** (2016)
 - **Waterdeep** (2020)
- **Built websites** (using Squarespace; some solo, some with an assistant)
 - **waterdeep.com** (2 times), **donchaffer.com.** (2 times), **creativeartsinitiative.com,** and **unusualtale.com**
- Ran **social media campaign** for River & Rail's production of *Every Brilliant Thing* (2019)
- **Participated in self-filmed documentary *As Yet Untitled*** (2020), still in production. Filmed self along with 18 other artists throughout pandemic lockdown of 2020.

AS CHURCH LEADER (1992-PRESENT)

- **Worship Team**
 - **Leader**
 - Church House of Westport, KC, MO (1992-1996)
 - **Team Member** (and sometimes leader)
 - Wichita Vineyard, Wichita, KS (1999-2000)
 - Jacob's Well, KC, MO (2000-2008)
 - St. Mary of Bethany's, Nashville, TN (20014-present)
 - **Trans-Local Worship Leader**
 - Led worship with Waterdeep in live performances, local churches, and conferences throughout U.S. (1995-2004)
- **Community Living Director**
 - **Church House of Westport, KC, MO** (1992-1994).
 - Leader of communal living "ministry house." Duties included:
 - Oversight of communal activities (bible study, house oversight meetings, etc.)
 - Facilitation of parole oversight as a halfway house
 - Oversight of ongoing ministry to homeless in neighborhood
- **Elder**
 - **Church House of Westport, KC, MO** (1993-1996)
 - **Jacob's Well, KC, MO** (2000-2003)

Software Skills

Software with which I'm familiar: competent is non-boldfaced; expert is boldfaced.

AUDIO SOFTWARE

- **Avid Pro Tools**
- **Avid Sibelius**
- Apple Garage Band
- Apple Logic Pro
- Propellerheads Reason
- **Native Instruments Komplete**
- Behringer X32
- IOS-based music creation apps: **Beathawk, Modstep, 1Chart**, & more

OFFICE SOFTWARE

- **Microsoft Office**
- **Google Suite**
- **Airtable**
- Apple iWork

GRAPHIC/VIDEO SOFTWARE

- **Adobe Premiere**
- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Indesign
- Adobe Lightroom
- IOS design apps: **Over, Procreate, Inkworks**, & more

EDUCATION SOFTWARE

- Canvas
- Zoom/Panopto

THEATRICAL SOFTWARE

- Final Draft
- QLab

ONLINE

- **Squarespace**
- **Mailchimp**
- **All social media platforms**

Awards, Fellowships, Commissions

ASCAP award ("Wicked Web"), 1999

Radio and Records Song of the Year Award ("You Are So Good to Me"), 2003

ASCAP award ("What Life Would be Like"), 2008

New Directors New Works Grant, The Drama League, 2010

Yale Institute for Musical Theater Finalist, 2011

Eugene O'Neill Music Theater Conference (Waterford, CT) participant, 2011

Georgia Bogardus Holof Lyricist Award, 2011

Richard Rodgers Award Finalist, 2011

Richard Rodgers Award Finalist, 2012

Spark and Echo Arts (NYC, NY) new one-act musical Commission, 2014

Bespoke Musical Festival (NYC, NY) new one-act musical Commission, 2014

Pacific Theatre (Vancouver, BC) new musical commission, 2014

- Eugene O'Neill Music Theater Conference (Waterford, CT) semi-finalist, 2017
- Eugene O'Neill Music Theater Conference (Waterford, CT) semi-finalist, 2019
- River & Rail Theatre Co. (Knoxville, TN) new musical Commission, 2019
- River & Rail Theatre Co. (Knoxville, TN) upcoming new musical Commission, 2020
- Wedgewood Circle's Goodlit Retreat (Stanford, KY) selected participant, 2020

Recordings (as producer/songwriter/engineer)

Partial credits as producer, songwriter, and/or engineer include songs/recordings with: Indigo Girls, Caitlyn Smith, Sara Groves, Third Day, Bebo Norman, All Sons & Daughters, Big Daddy Weave, Matthew Perryman Jones, Katie Herzig, Matt Wertz, Andrew Peterson, Sandra McCracken, Robbie Seay, Nathan Tasker, Jami Smith, Jennie Lee Riddle, Addison Road, Jenny Simmons, Steven Delopoulos, Geoff Moore, Andrew Osenga, Kendall Payne, Maeve, Sevenglory, Chasen, Christopher Williams, Eddie Kirkland, Trent Dabbs, Ben Rector, Natalie LaRue, Pawn Shop Kings, Remedy Drive, The Swift, Tricia Brock, Attaboy.

Music for television

Partial credits as producer, songwriter, and/or engineer include songs on: Private Practice, Pretty Little Liars, One Tree Hill, Eli Stone, Flashpoint, The Client List, Make It or Break It, Beauty and the Beast, Younger, Necessary Roughness, Red Band Society, Melissa and Tye, Teen Mom, Sixteen and Pregnant.

Writing (for TV, Film, Theater, & Print)

TELEVISION

- **The Slugs & Bugs Show:** Staff writer, season 2; 5 episodes. Right Now Media (2020)

FILM

- **Sonata at Payne Hollow:** wrote & recorded score for a short film of this Wendell Berry play, dir. by Matt Logan, produced by Rabbit Room (2020)

MUSICAL THEATER

Boldfaced pieces were written solo. More details, including co-writers, synopsis, development, production history, and press available in Theatrical Works Appendix.

- The Sparkley Clean Funeral Singers (music, lyrics) published by Concord Theatricals, 2016.
- Son of a Gun (book, music, lyrics)
- The Unusual Tale of Mary & Joseph's Baby (music, lyrics)
- The Hank Legacy (co-creator, arranger)

- The Cash Legacy (co-creator, arranger)
- **The (Almost) Unforgettable Edwin Booth** (book, music, lyrics)
- The Zombie Family Musical (music, lyrics)
- The Burn Vote (music, lyrics)

PLAYS WITH MUSIC, AND ONE ACTS

- **The Gemini Twins** (book, music, lyrics)
- Is This Heaven, Evan? (music, lyrics)
- Medea (music)
- Memory of Damage (music)

ADAPTATIONS

- Contributing writer on *Job* and several *Psalms* in the bible translation, *The Voice*, published by Thomas Nelson, 2012.

ESSAYS, COLUMNS, SHORT STORIES, POEMS

All pieces listed here were published as noted.

- "Sixty-Five Miles an Hour," essay, *The Art of Being*, Waterbrook Press, 2004.
- "Statement," multiple columns, *Relevant Magazine*, 2004-2005.
- "On the Iron Bar & the Price You Pay, James Dean," poem, *Molehill Journal Vol. 1*, 2014.
- "This Is How I Like to Imagine It Will Be," poem, *Molehill Journal Vol. 1*, 2014.
- "The Cartoon Eskimo Who Never Was," lyric essay, *Molehill Journal, Vol. 4*, 2014.
- "Panama City Beach, Sixteenth Floor," lyric essay, *Art House America Blog*, 2016.
- "The Wilderness Journal of Eli Ben-Ammi," short story, *Molehill Journal Vol. 5*, 2018.
- *Ramble & Sway: A Collection of Various Writings*, collection, self-published, 2020.

CREATIVE NON-FICTION

- **Untitled Memoir** (100,000 words, in development), selected for inclusion to Wedgewood Circle's *GoodLit Retreat*.

Recordings (as Recording Artist)

- Old Stuff (*Don & Lori Chaffer, 1991-1993*)
- You Were at the Time for Love (*Don Chaffer, 1994*)
- To Chase Away the Birds (*Waterdeep, 1995*)
- Sink or Swim (*Waterdeep, 1997*)
- Enter the Worship Circle [a/k/a/ First Circle] (*Waterdeep & 100 Portraits, 1999*)
- Live at the New Earth (*Waterdeep, 1999*)
- Everyone's Beautiful (*Waterdeep, 1999*)
- Everyone's Little CD (*Waterdeep, 1999*)
- Dogpaddle (*Waterdeep, 2000*)
- You Are So Good To me (*Waterdeep, 2001*)
- What You Don't Know (*Don Chaffer, 2002*)

- Whole 'Nother Deal
(Don Chaffer & Waterdeep, 2003)
- 1Beginning (Lori Chaffer, 2003)
- Waterdeep Live 3.26.03 - Muncie, IN
(Waterdeep, 2004)
- Songs from The Voice, Volume 1
(Waterdeep & Various, 2006)
- Songs from The Voice, Volume 2
(Waterdeep & Various, 2006)
- Heart Attack Time Machine
(Waterdeep, 2007)
- Self-Titled (*The Khrusty Brothers*, 2007)
- Pink & Blue (Waterdeep, 2008)
- In the Middle of It (Waterdeep, 2009)
- The Collection (Waterdeep, 2010)
- An Unfinished Tale, Volume 1: Beauty
(Don Chaffer, 2010)
- No Doubt of Sunshine
(Waterdeep, 2011)
- An Unfinished Tale, Volume 2: Truth
(Don Chaffer, 2011)
- Moment (Waterdeep, 2013)
- Self-Titled [double album]
(Waterdeep, 2015)
- The Unusual Tale of Mary & Joseph's
Baby (Waterdeep, 2018)

References

- **Steve Taylor**, Dir. of School of Theatre & Cinematic Arts, filmmaker, recording artist, etc.
 - Phone: (310) 428-2650
 - Email: rstaylor@lipscomb.edu
- **Chris Cragin-Day**, Assoc. Prof. of English & Theater, King's College; Playwright, NYC, NY
 - Phone: (917)-364-0970
 - Email: chrisraginday@gmail.com
- **Joshua Peterson**, Artistic Dir., River & Rail Theatre, Knoxville, TN
 - Phone: (469) 767-4727
 - Email: joshua@riverandrailtheatre.com
- **Matt Logan**, Matt Logan Productions; Former Artistic Dir, Studio Tenn, Nashville, TN
 - Phone: (917) 558-5008
 - Email: matt@mattlogan.com
- **Mark Nicholas**, VP Song Publishing, Integrity Music, Nashville, TN
 - Phone: (615) 429-4521
 - Email: Mark.Nicholas@integritymusic.com

Theatrical Works APPENDIX

Musicals

SON OF A GUN

(Musical comedy/drama, co-composer/lyricist/book-writer, with Chris Cragin-Day & Lori Chaffer)

SYNOPSIS

Dueling cowboys, flaming vans, young love, and angelic hosts. The tale of a wildly eccentric family band, and the son determined to escape the insanity. (5M, 2W)

DEVELOPMENT

- Drama League reading at Playwright's Horizons, NYC - 2010
- The Public Theater's Joe's Pub concert reading, NYC - 2011
- Eugene O'Neill NMTTC (dir. by Gabriel Barre), CT – 2011

PRODUCTION

- Firebone Theatre showcase at Theater Row (dir. By Gabriel Barre), NYC - 2012

PRESS

"...[Son of Gun has] grace, charm, and a kickass score that will leave you singing all the way home."
-theatremania.com

THE SPARKLEY CLEAN FUNERAL SINGERS

(musical comedy, co-composer/lyricist, with Lori Fischer) Published by Samuel French

SYNOPSIS

Country-singing sister act, The Lashley Sisters, are back home recuperating from elder sister, Lashley's alcoholic shenanigans. Backup singer-Junie has them singing custom-written songs for funerals at the local church, but what she really wants is to be a lead singer. (2M, 2F)

DEVELOPMENT

- York Theatre Developmental Reading Series, NYC – 2013, 2015
- Florida Studio Theatre Reading Series, FL – 2015

PRODUCTIONS

- Capital Repertory Theatre (NY)
- Cumberland County Playhouse (TN) – 2016

PRESS

"...Entertains supremely and makes you laugh out loud in abundance... A new voice in musical theater that is quite possibly unlike anything you've heard before." - Broadway World

"Gales of laughter, moments of tenderness and poignant stories are being served up in...a wildly delightful new musical comedy." - Crossville Chronicle

THE UNUSUAL TALE OF MARY AND JOSEPH'S BABY

(musical comedy, composer/lyricist, with Chris-Cragin Day)

SYNOPSIS

This quirky, intimate folk musical comedy puts a human twist on the age-old biblical story. (2W, 2M)

DEVELOPMENT

- Olmsted Salon reading, NYC - 2014
- River & Rail Theatre reading, TN - 2015

PRODUCTIONS

- Fringe Festival, NYC - 2016
- River and Rail Theatre, TN - 2016
- Theater 315, NYC - 2016
- River and Rail Theatre, TN & OK - 2017
- The King's College, NYC - 2017
- Unusual Tale Tour, TN & OK - 2018

PRESS

"A personal and careful look at the life of a couple coming to terms with this virgin birth and the enormity of their new, important place as impoverished people. It's enough for this godless pessimist to crack several smiles and even, impossibly, tap my feet." -Theater is Easy

"...the magic in the air was palpable." - Knoxville Mercury

THE HANK LEGACY

(musical/revue co-created w/ Matt Logan)

SYNOPSIS

It's Hank Night at the local bar. As friends and strangers mingle and collaborate with the house band, they render both classic and contemporary interpretations of the legendary songwriting catalog of Hank Senior. (4M, 4F)

PRODUCTION

- Studio Tenn, TN – 2013, 2015

PRESS

"I love to be entertained!... Join me in hoping they bring it back so more folks can enjoy it as much as I did." – Reba McEntire

THE CASH LEGACY

(musical/revue co-created w/ Matt Logan)

SYNOPSIS

From the living room to the stage and back again, this crack band, and ensemble of soulful singers takes us from Arkansas sing-along to the Man in Black writ large on stage, revealing the depth and breadth of the legend of Johnny Cash. (4M, 4F)

PRODUCTION

- Studio Tenn, TN – 2015, 2017

PRESS

“The respect that was shown to our family and our humble roots moved me. I think Johnny would have been proud, just as I was. Thank you!” - Joanne Cash

THE (ALMOST) UNFORGETTABLE EDWIN BOOTH

(musical comedy/drama, composer/lyricist/book-writer) This show is still in development.

SYNOPSIS

How does the brother of Lincoln’s assassin deal with the stain on his name? He becomes a world-famous actor. But after an argument with his daughter and a stroke, Edwin Booth is face to face with his brother again and the doubt and torment he buried along the way. (5M, 3F)

DEVELOPMENT

- Studio Tenn table reading, TN – 2017
- Sea Dog Theatre table reading, NYC – 2017
- Sea Dog Theatre & Olmsted Salon reading, NYC – 2018
 - Dir. By Gabriel Barre
 - Included Matt & Dominic Bogart, Kate Reinders, MacIntyre Dixon, Skye Scott.

THE ZOMBIE FAMILY MUSICAL

(musical comedy, co-composer/lyricist with Lori Chaffer, with Chris-Cragin Day) This show is still in development.

The Ludwick family doesn’t die in the opening scene’s car wreck; they become undead: zombies, who are recruited by The P.A.N. (Prevent Apocalypse Now) Zombie Collective. There, they learn that, if they refrain from eating human flesh, they retain both their intelligence *and* their chance for personal epiphany, after which comes a “poof” and then a neatly labelled jar of their ashes, while their soul moves on to wherever it is souls move on to. Watch our family of four seek to “epoofinize” in this zany existential romp. (4M, 3F)

DEVELOPMENT

- Firebone Theatre at King’s College reading, NYC – 2017
 - Dir. By Misti Wills

THE BURN VOTE

(musical, co-composer/lyricist with Lori Chaffer, with Chris-Cragin Day) This show is still in development.

The 19th amendment (granting women the right to vote) has been ratified in 35 states. One more makes it official, the perfect 36. When Tennessee state legislature calls a vote in the summer of 1920, it's tied up. It all comes down to one 23-year-old legislator (the youngest in Tennessee history), Harry T. Burn. On the legislature floor, he opens up a letter from his mother... (4M, 3F)

DEVELOPMENT

- Commissioned by River & Rail Theatre Co., Knoxville, TN–2019
 - River & Rail table reading, Knoxville– 2019
-

Plays with Music, and One Acts

THE GEMINI TWINS

(Play w/ music, composer/lyricist/book-writer) This show is still in development.

DEVELOPMENT

- Commissioned by River & Rail Theater, Knoxville, TN
 - River & Rail Table Reading, Zoom – 2020
-

IS THIS HEAVEN, EVAN?

(one act musical comedy, co-composer/lyricist, written w/ Lori Fischer)

PRODUCTION

- Bespoke Music Theater Festival, at The York Theatre, NYC – 2014
-

MEDEA

(composer for songs in the play by Euripides)

PRODUCTION

- Huntington University, IN – 2012
-

MEMORY OF DAMAGE

(co-composer with Lori Chaffer for songs in a play by Lori Fischer) This show is still in development.

DEVELOPMENT

- Creative Arts Initiative Reading, NYC – 2016
-