



media contact: Eileen Breen (646) 294-3634 | eileen.breen@dezartperforms.org

Dezart Performs' Makes Plans to Convert Palm Springs Church into a Theater

David C. Lee Pledges \$500,000 to Dezart Performs' Capital Campaign

7, October 2024 - Palm Springs, CA: As a result of a multi-year Capital Fundraising Campaign, Dezart Performs has entered into contract to purchase the First Church of Christ, Scientist at 605 South Riverside Drive in Palm Springs to convert into a fully-equipped professional theater. Designed by Albert Frey in 1957, the building is a pristine, perfectly preserved architectural gem.

The 6,000 sq. ft. Dezart Playhouse will help meet the expanding needs of the Company's continuous growth in addition to serving as a hub for diverse activities, community events and cultural engagement. The new playhouse will enhance the vibrancy of the local arts scene ensuring a variety of voices and talents are represented and celebrated. The space will be converted to include a 150 seat fully-equipped theater, dressing rooms, a rehearsal hall, meeting rooms, and lobby with box office and bar. *"The transformation of this stunning Albert Frey-designed church into a state-of-the-art professional theater is not just a dream come true; it's a profound honor,"* says Founder and Artistic Director Michael Shaw. *"We are privileged to have this unique and rare opportunity to breathe new life into this architectural gem. As we embark on this journey, I am filled with overwhelming joy at the prospect of creating a vibrant space for art and community in the heart of Palm Springs. This endeavor celebrates our rich history and fosters connections, creativity, and a sense of belonging for all who enter. Together, we will cultivate a dynamic environment where ideas flourish and community thrives."* The Dezart Playhouse will be open for the 2025/26 season based on the current schedule.

Writer/Producer and Palm Springs resident David C. Lee has generously pledged \$500,000, which includes a \$200,000 matching donor challenge to help cover the cost of a down payment to support the purchase of the building that will serve as a permanent theater home. *"I am very excited about this project; Dezart Performs has been producing professional theater in Palm Springs for sixteen years. Owning their own theater here will mean that the city and the entire Coachella Valley will permanently benefit from their exceptional productions. I look forward to seeing what they do in their new theater,"* says David C. Lee.

The building was designed in 1957 by Albert Frey, one of the mid-20th century architectural giants in the Coachella Valley, and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Board and staff of Dezart Performs respect the building's architectural provenance and appreciate its Modernist aesthetic. *"We intend to maintain its integrity as much as practical, consistent with the needs of a professional theater company,"* says Board member and preservationist Eric Chiel. *"The visual statement the building makes complements the quality of our stage work. Its materials, motifs, and color reflect Modernist principles and speak to the period during which it was created. Its striking design is an asset for the Company."* The project's architect has not yet been selected. Adam Gilbert and Kara Kalisvaart of The Firm are representing Dezart Performs in the purchase.

To date, Dezart Performs' Next Stage Campaign has raised a total of \$1,400,000 in gifts and pledges towards a \$2 million goal for theater conversion and down payment of the building. In response to Lee's challenge, the Campaign has raised \$150,000 towards the \$200,000 match and continues to seek matching funds for the down payment, which must be in hand by closing on November 29, 2024. The remaining \$300,000 of his pledge will be paid over three years to assist with mortgage payments. Major donors to the campaign will receive permanent recognition as Founders and have a choice of naming opportunities. For information on how to support this campaign, contact Gailya Brown at gailya.brown@dezartperforms.org.

Dezart Performs, Palm Springs' only Equity theatre and one of Coachella Valley's preeminent theatre companies, recognizes that the performing arts enrich the life and culture of a community, promote greater understanding, and provoke insightful discussion. As a 501(c)(3) non-profit theatre company, its mission is to provide an artistic home for bold and cutting-edge plays, creating an atmosphere of artistic growth for actors, writers and directors who uniquely contribute to the diverse theatrical environment in the Coachella Valley.

For information about Dezart Performs' 2024/25 season, visit dezartperforms.org or call 760-322-0179 ext 1.

###